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CHAPTERS FROM A LIFE

BY

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS

ILLUSTRATED

29 330

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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1896

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CHAPTERS FROM A LIFE

I

AN ANDOVER HOME

Has it not been said that once in a lifetime most of us succumb to the particular situation against which we have cultivated the strongest principles? If there be one such, among the possibilities to which a truly civilized career is liable, more than another objectionable to the writer of these words, the creation of autobiography has long been that one.

Yet, for that offense, once criminal to my taste, I find myself hereby about to become indictable; and do set my hand and seal, on this day of the recall of my dearest literary oath, in this year of eminent autobiographical examples, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five.

"There is ——, who has written a charming series of personal reminiscences, and ——, and ——.

"You might meet your natural shrinking by

allowing yourself to treat especially of your literary life; including, of course, whatever went to form and sustain it."

"I suppose I *might*," I sigh. The answer is faint; but the deed is decreed. Shall I be sorry for it?

It is a gray day, on gray Cape Ann, as I write these words. The fog is breathing over the downs. The outside steamers shriek from off the Point, as they feel their way at live of noon, groping as though it were dead of night, and stars and coast lights all were smitten dark, and every pilot were a stranger to his chart.

A stranger to my chart, I, doubtful, put about, and make the untried coast.

At such a moment one thinks wistfully of that fair, misty world which is all one's own, yet on the outside of which one stands so humbly and so gently. One thinks of the unseen faces, of the unknown friends who have read one's tales of other people's lives, and cared to read, and told one so, and made one believe in their kindness and affection and fidelity for thirty years. And the hesitating heart calls out to them: Will *you* let me be sorry? Thirty years! It is a good while that you and I have kept step together. Shall we miss it now? If *you* will care to hear such chapters as may select themselves from the story of

the story-teller, you have the oldest right to choose, and I, the happy will to please you if I can.

The lives of the makers of books are very much like other people's in most respects, but especially in this : that they are either rebels to, or subjects of, their ancestry. The lives of some literary persons begin a good while after they are born. Others begin a good while before.

Of this latter kind is mine.

It has sometimes occurred to me to find myself the possessor of a sort of unholy envy of writers concerning whom our stout American phrase says that they have "made themselves." What delight to be aware that one has not only created one's work, but the worker! What elation in the remembrance of the battle against a commercial, or a scientific, or a worldly and superficial heredity ; in the recollection of the tug with habit and education, and the overthrow of impulses setting in other directions than the chosen movement of one's own soul!

What pleasure in the proud knowledge that all one's success is one's own doing, and the sum of it cast up to one's credit upon the long ledger of life! To this exhilarating self-content I can lay no claim. For whatever measure of

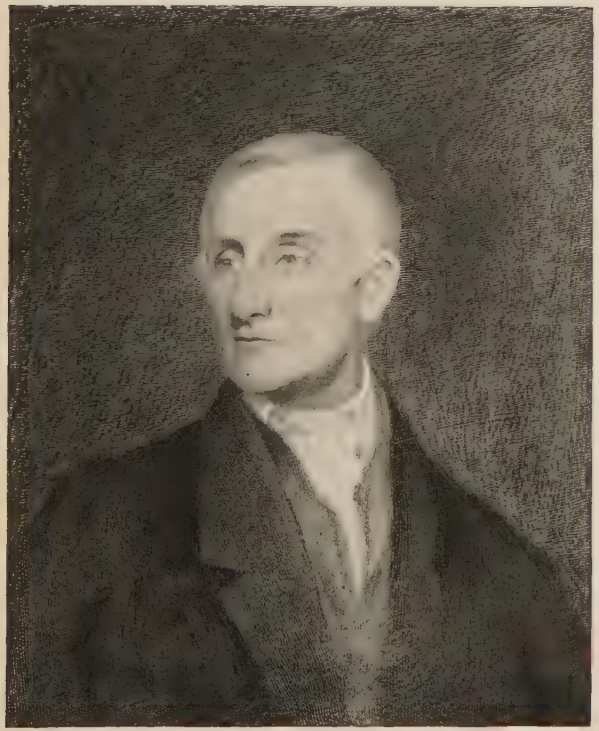
what is called success has fallen to my lot, I can ask no credit. I find myself in the chastened position of one whose literary abilities all belong to one's ancestors.

It is humbling — I do not deny that it may be morally invigorating — to feel that whatever is "worth mentioning" in my life is no affair of mine, but falls under the beautiful and terrible law by which the dead men and women whose blood bounds in our being control our destinies.

Yet (with the notable exception of my father) I have less than the usual store of personal acquaintance with the "people who most influenced me." Of my grandfather, Moses Stuart, I have but two recollections; and these, taken together, may not be quite devoid of interest, as showing how the law of selection works in the mind of an imaginative child.

I remember seeing the eminent Professor of Sacred Literature come into his dining-room one morning in his old house on Andover Hill which was built for him, and marked the creation of his department in the early days of the seminary history. He looked very tall and imposing. He had a mug in his hand, and his face smiled like the silver of which it was made.

The mug was full of milk, and he handed it ceremoniously to the year-old baby, his name-



REV. MOSES STUART

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sake and grandson, my first brother, whose high-chair stood at the table.

Then, I remember — it must have been a little more than a year after that — seeing the professor in his coffin in the front hall; that he looked taller than he did before, but still imposing; that he had his best coat on — the one, I think, in which he preached; and that he was the first dead person I had ever seen.

Whenever the gray-headed men who knew him used to sit about, relating anecdotes of him — as, how many commentaries he published, or how he introduced the first German lexicon into this country (as if a girl in short dresses would be absorbingly interested in her grandfather's dictionaries!) — I saw the silver mug and the coffin.

Gradually the German lexicon in a hazy condition got melted in between them. Sometimes the baby's mug sat upon the dictionary. Sometimes the dictionary lay upon the coffin. Sometimes the baby spilled the milk out of the mug upon the dictionary. But for my personal uses, the memoirs of the distinguished scholar began and ended with the mug and the coffin.

The other grandfather was not distinguished; he was but an orthodox minister of ability and originality, and with a vivacious personal history. Of him I knew something. From his

own lips came thrilling stories of his connection with the underground railway of slavery days; how he sent the sharpest carving-knife in the house, concealed in a basket of food, to a hidden fugitive slave who had vowed never to be taken alive, and whose master had come North in search of him. It was a fine thing, that throbbing humanity, which could in those days burst the reformer out of the evangelical husk, and I learned my lesson from it. ("Where *did* she get it?" conservative friends used to wail, whenever I was seen to have tumbled into the last new and unfashionable reform.)

From his own lips, too, I heard the accounts of that extraordinary case of house-possession of which (like Wesley) this innocent and unimaginative country minister, who had no more faith in "spooks" than he had in Universalists, was made the astonished victim.

Night upon night I have crept gasping to bed, and shivered for hours with my head under the clothes, after an evening spent in listening to this authentic and fantastic family tale. How the candlesticks walked out into the air from the mantelpiece and back again; how the chairs of skeptical visitors collected from all parts of the country to study what one had hardly then begun to call the "phenomena" at the parsonage at Stratford, Connecticut, hopped after the

guests when they crossed the room; how the dishes at the table leaped, and the silver forks were bent by unseen hands, and cold turnips dropped from the solid ceiling; and ghastly images were found, composed of underclothing proved to have been locked at the time in drawers of which the only key lay all the while in Dr. Phelps's pocket; and how the mysterious agencies, purporting by alphabetical raps upon bed-head or on table to be in torments of the nether world, being asked what their host could do to relieve them, demanded a piece of squash pie.

From the old man's own calm hands, within a year or two of his death, I received the legacy of the written journal of these phenomena, as recorded by the victim from day to day, during the seven months that this mysterious misfortune dwelt within his house.

It may be prudent to say, just here, that it will be quite useless to make any further inquiries of me upon the subject, or to ask of me — a request which has been repeated till I am fain to put an end to it — for either loan or copy of these records for the benefit of either personal or scientific curiosity. Both loaning and copying are now impossible, and have been made so by family wishes which will be sacredly respected. The phenomena themselves have

long been too widely known to be ignored, and I have no hesitation in making reference to them.

Perhaps it is partly on account of the traditions respecting this bit of family history that I am so often asked if I am a spiritualist. I am sometimes tempted to reply in grammar comprehensible to the writers of certain letters which I receive upon the subject : —

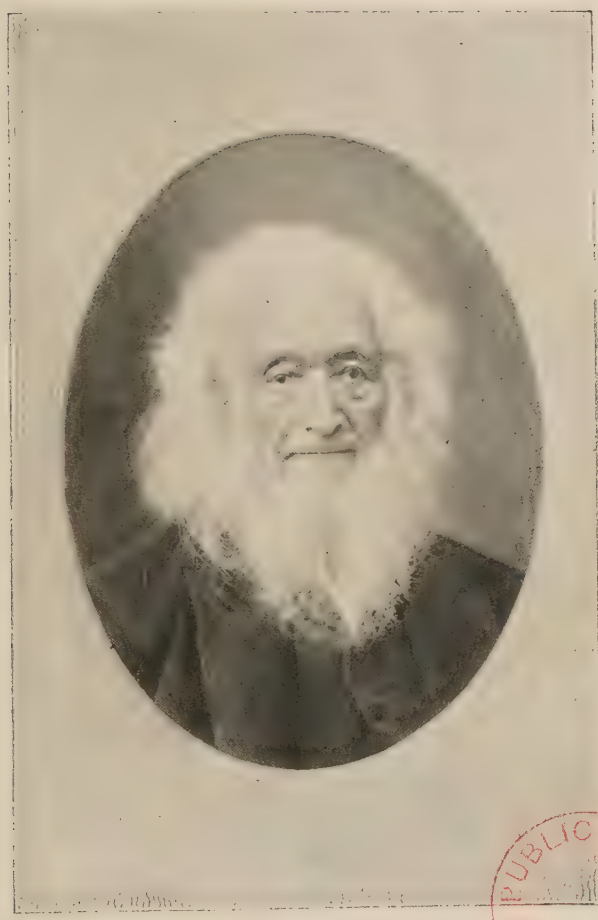
"No ; nor none of our folks ! "

How the Connecticut parson on whom this mysterious infliction fell ever came out of it *not* a spiritualist, who can tell ? That the phenomena were facts, and facts explicable by no known natural law, he was forced, like others in similar positions, to believe and admit. That he should study the subject of spiritualism carefully from then until the end of his life, was inevitable.

But, as nearly as I can make it out, on the whole, he liked his Bible better.

Things like these did not happen on Andover Hill ; and my talks with this very interesting grandfather gave me my first vivid sensation of the possibilities of life.

With what thrills of hope and fear I listened for thumps on the head of my bed, or watched anxiously to see my candlestick walk out into the air !



REV. DR. E. PHELPS

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But not a thump! Not a rap! Never a snap of the weakest proportions (not explicable by natural laws) has, from that day to this, visited my personal career. Not a candlestick ever walked an inch for me. I have never been able to induce a chair to hop after me. No turnip has consented to drop from the ceiling for me. Planchette, in her day, wrote hundreds of lines for me, but never one that was of the slightest possible significance to me or to the universe at large. Never did a medium tell me anything that ever came to pass; though one of them once made a whole winter miserable by prophesying a death which did not occur.

Being destitute of objections to belief in the usefulness of spiritualistic mystery, — in fact, by temperament, perhaps inclining to hope that such phenomena may be tamed and yoked, and made to work for human happiness, — yet there seems to be something about me which these agencies do not find congenial. Though I have gone longing for a sign, no sign has been given me. Though I have been always ready to believe all other people's mysteries, no inexplicable facts have honored my experience.

The only personal prophecy ever strictly fulfilled in my life was — I am not certain whether I ought to feel embarrassed in alluding to it — made by a gypsy fortune-teller. She was young

and pretty, the seventh child of a seventh child, and she lived in a Massachusetts shoe-town by the name of Lynn. And what was it? Oh, but you must excuse me.

The grandfather to whom these marvels happened was not, as I say, a literary man; yet even he did write a little book — a religious tale, or tract, after the manner of his day and profession; and it took to itself a circulation of two hundred thousand copies. I remember how Mr. James T. Fields laughed when he heard of it — that merry laugh peculiar to himself.

"You can't help it," the publisher said; "you come of a family of large circulations."

One day I was at school with my brother, — a little, private school, down by what were called the English dormitories in Andover.

I was eight years old. Some one came in and whispered to the teacher. Her face turned very grave, and she came up to us quietly, and called us out into the entry, and gently put on our things.

"You are to go home," she said; "your mother is dead." I took my little brother's hand without a word, and we trudged off. I do not think we spoke — I am sure we did not cry — on the way home. I remember perfectly that we were very gayly dressed. Our mother liked bright, almost barbaric colors on children.

The little boy's coat was of red broadcloth, and my cape of a canary yellow, dyed at home in white-oak dye. The two colors flared before my eyes as we shuffled along and crushed the crisp, dead leaves that were tossing in the autumn wind all over Andover Hill.

When we got home they told us it was a mistake; she was not dead; and we were sent back to school. But, in a few weeks after that, one day we were told we need not go to school at all; the red and yellow coats came off, and little black ones took their places. The new baby, in his haggard father's arms, was baptized at his mother's funeral; and we looked on, and wondered what it all meant, and what became of children whose mother was obliged to go to heaven when she seemed so necessary in Andover.

At eight years of age a child cannot be expected to know her mother intimately, and it is hard for me always to distinguish between the effect produced upon me by her literary success as I have since understood it, and that left by her own truly extraordinary personality upon the annals of the nursery.

My mother, whose name I am proud to wear, was the eldest daughter of Professor Stuart, and inherited his intellectuality. At the time of her death she was at the first blossom of her

very positive and widely-promising success as a writer of the simple home stories which took such a hold upon the popular heart. Her "Sunnyside" had already reached a circulation of one hundred thousand copies, and she was following it fast — too fast — by other books for which the critics and the publishers clamored. Her last book and her last baby came together, and killed her. She lived one of those rich and piteous lives such as only gifted women know; torn by the civil war of the dual nature which can be given to women only. It was as natural for her daughter to write as to breathe; but it was impossible for her daughter to forget that a woman of intellectual power could be the most successful of mothers.

"Everybody's mother is a remarkable woman," my father used to say when he read overdrawn memoirs indited by devout children; and yet I have sometimes felt as if even the generation that knows her not would feel a certain degree of interest in the tact and power by which this unusual woman achieved the difficult reconciliation between genius and domestic life.

In our times and to our women such a problem is practical, indeed. One need not possess genius to understand it now. A career is enough.

The author of "Sunnyside," "The Angel on

the Right Shoulder," and "Peep at Number Five," lived before women had careers and public sympathy in them. Her nature was drawn against the grain of her times and of her circumstances; and where our feet find easy walking, hers were hedged. A child's memories go for something by way of tribute to the achievement of one of those rare women of the elder time whose gifts forced her out, but whose heart held her in.

I can remember no time when I did not understand that my mother must write books because people would have and read them; but I cannot remember one hour in which her children needed her and did not find her.

My first distinct vision of this kind of a mother gives her by the nursery lamp, reading to us her own stories, written for ourselves, never meant to go beyond that little public of two, and illustrated in colored crayons by her own pencil. For her gift in this direction was of an original quality, and had she not been a writer she must have achieved something as an artist.

Perhaps it was to keep the standards up, and a little girl's filial adoration down, that these readings ended with some classic — Wordsworth, I remember most often — "We are Seven," or "Lucy Gray."

It is certain that I very early had the convic-

tion that a mother was a being of power and importance to the world; but that the world had no business with her when we wanted her. In a word, she was a strong and lovely symmetry — a woman whose heart had not enfeebled her head, but whose head could never freeze her heart.

I hardly know which of those charming ways in which I learned to spell the word motherhood impressed me most. All seemed to go on together side by side and step by step. Now she sits correcting proof-sheets, and now she is painting apostles for the baby's first Bible lesson. Now she is writing her new book, and now she is dyeing things canary-yellow in the white-oak dye — for the professor's salary is small, and a crushing economy was in those days one of the conditions of faculty life on Andover Hill. Now — for her practical ingenuity was unlimited — she is whittling little wooden feet to stretch the children's stockings on, to save them from shrinking; and now she is reading to us from the old, red copy of Hazlitt's "British Poets," by the register, upon a winter night. Now she is a popular writer, incredulous of her first success, with her future flashing before her; and now she is a tired, tender mother, crooning to a sick child, while the MS. lies unprinted on the table, and the pub-

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS, HER MOTHER, AND INFANT BROTHER STUART

lishers are wishing their professor's wife were a free woman, childless and solitary, able to send copy as fast as it is wanted. The struggle killed her, but she fought till she fell.

In these different days, when,

> "Pealing, the clock of time
> Has struck the Woman's Hour,"

I have sometimes been glad, as my time came to face the long question which life puts to-day to all women who think and feel, and who care for other women and are loyal to them, that I had those early visions of my own to look upon.

When I was learning why the sun rose and the moon set, how the flowers grew and the rain fell, that God and heaven and art and letters existed, that it was intelligent to say one's prayers, and that well-bred children never told a lie, I learned that a mother can be strong and still be sweet, and sweet although she is strong; and that she whom the world and her children both have need of, is of more value to each, for this very reason.

I said it was impossible to be her daughter and not to write. Rather, I should say, impossible to be *their* daughter and not to have something to say, and a pen to say it.

The comparatively recent close of my father's life has not left him yet forgotten, and it can hardly be necessary for me to do more than to

refer to the name of Austin Phelps to recall to that part of our public which knew and loved him the quality of his work.

"The Still Hour" is yet read, and there are enough who remember how widely this book has been known and loved on both sides of the ocean, and how rich was the professor's literary gift. His Andover lectures, which in their published form have become classics, stand without peers to-day, and are the accepted text-books of his department.

It has fallen to me otherwise to say so much of my peculiar indebtedness to my father, that I shall forbid myself, and spare my reader, too much repetition of a loving credit which it would not be possible altogether to omit from this chapter.

He who becomes father and mother in one to motherless children, bears a burden which men shirk or stagger under; and there was not a shirking cell in his brain or heart.

As I have elsewhere said: "There was hardly a chapter in my life of which he was not in some sense, whether revealed or concealed, the hero."

"If I am asked to sum in a few words the vivid points of his influence, I find it as hard to give definite form to my indebtedness to the Christian scholar whose daughter it is my honor

to be, as to specify the particulars in which one responds to sunshine or oxygen. He was my climate. As soon as I began to think, I began to reverence thought and study and the hard work of a man devoted to the high ends of a scholar's life. His department was that of rhetoric, and his appreciation of the uses and graces of language very early descended like a mantle upon me. I learned to read and to love reading, not because I was made to, but because I could not help it. It was the atmosphere I breathed."

"Day after day the watchful girl observed the life of a student — its scholarly tastes, its high ideals, its scorn of worldliness and paltry aims or petty indulgences, and forever its magnificent habits of *work*."

"At sixteen, I remember, there came to me a distinct arousing or awakening to the intellectual life. As I look back, I see it in a flash-light. Most of the important phases or crises of our lives can be traced to some one influence or event, and this one I connect directly with the reading to me by my father of the writings of De Quincey and the poems of Wordsworth. Every one who has ever heard him preach or lecture remembers the rare quality of Professor Phelps's voice. As a pulpit orator he was one of the few, and to hear him read in his own

study was an absorbing experience. To this day I cannot put myself outside of certain pages of the laureate or the essayist. I do not read; I listen. The great lines beginning —

> "'Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
> Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears;'

the great passage which opens: 'Then like a chorus the passion deepened,' and which rises to the aching cry: 'Everlasting farewells! . . . Everlasting farewells!' ring in my ears as they left his lips."

For my first effort to sail the sea of letters, it occurs to me that I ought to say that my father's literary reputation cannot be held responsible.

I had reached (to take a step backwards in the story) the mature age of thirteen. I was a little girl in low-necked gingham dresses, I know, because I remember I had on one (of a purple shade, and incredibly unbecoming to a half-grown, brunette girl) one evening when my first gentleman caller came to see me.

I felt that the fact that he was my Sunday-school teacher detracted from the importance of the occasion, but did not extinguish it.

It was perhaps half-past eight, and, obediently to law and gospel, I had gone upstairs.

The actual troubles of life have never dulled

my sense of mortification at overhearing from my little room at the head of the stairs, where I was struggling to get into that gingham gown and present a tardy appearance, a voice distinctly excusing me on the ground that it was past her usual bedtime, and she had gone to bed.

Whether the anguish of that occasion so far aged me that it had anything to do with my first literary undertaking, I cannot say; but I am sure that it was during this particular year that I determined to become an individual and contribute to the "Youth's Companion."

I did so. My contribution was accepted and paid for by the appearance in my father's post-office box of the paper for a year; and my impression is that I wore high-necked dresses pretty soon thereafter, and was allowed to sit up till nine o'clock. At any rate, these memorable events are distinctly intertwined in my mind.

This was in the days when even the "Companion," that oldest and most delightful of children's journals, printed things like these: —

"WHY JULIA B. LOVED THE COUNTRY.

"Julia B. loved the country because whenever she walked out she could see God in the face of Nature."

I really think that the semi-column which I sent to that distinguished paper was a tone or

two above this. But I can remember nothing about it, except that there was a sister who neglected her little brothers, and hence defeated the first object of existence in a woman-child. It was very proper, and very pious, and very much like what well-brought-up little girls were taught to do, to be, to suffer, or to write in those days. I have often intended to ask Mr. Ford if the staff discovered any signs of literary promise in that funny little performance.

At all events, my literary ambitions, with this solitary exercise, came to a sudden suspension. I have no recollection of having written or of having wanted to write anything more for a long time.

I was not in the least a precocious young person, and very much of a tomboy into the bargain. I think I was far more likely to have been found on the top of an apple-tree or walking the length of the seminary fence than writing rhymes or reading "solid reading." I know that I was once told by a queer old man in the street that little girls should not walk fences, and that I stood still and looked at him, transfixed with contempt. I do not think I vouchsafed him any answer at all. But this must have been while I was still in the little gingham gowns.

Perhaps this is the place, if anywhere, to

mention the next experiment at helping along the literature of my native land of which I have any recollection. There was another little contribution — a pious little contribution, like the first. When it was written, or what it was about, or where it was printed, it is impossible to remember ; but I know that it appeared in some extremely orthodox young people's periodical — I think, one with a missionary predilection. The point of interest I find to have been that I was paid for it.

With the exception of some private capital amassed by abstaining from butter (a method of creating a fortune of whose wisdom, I must say, I had the same doubts then that I have now), this was the first money I had ever earned. The sum was two dollars and a half. It became my immediate purpose not to squander this wealth. I had no spending money in particular that I recall. Three cents a week was, I believe, for years the limit of my personal income, and I am compelled to own that this sum was not expended at book-stalls, or for the benefit of the heathen who appealed to the generosity of professors' daughters through the treasurer of the chapel Sunday-school ; but went solidly for cream cakes and apple turnovers alternately, one each week.

Two dollars and a half represented to me

a standard of munificent possession which it would be difficult to make most girls in their first teens, and socially situated to-day as I was then, understand. To waste this fortune in riotous living was impossible. From the hour that I received that check for "two-fifty," cream cakes began to wear a juvenile air, and turnovers seemed unworthy of my position in life. I remember begging to be allowed to invest the sum "in pictures," and that my father, gently diverting my selection from a frowsy and popular "Hope" at whose memory I shudder even yet, induced me to find that I preferred some excellent photographs of Thorwaldsen's "Night" and "Morning," which he framed for me, and which hang in our rooms to-day.

It is impossible to forget the sense of dignity which marks the hour when one becomes a wage-earner. The humorous side of it is the least of it — or was in my case. I felt that I had suddenly acquired value — to myself, to my family, and to the world.

Probably all people who write "for a living" would agree with me in recalling the first check as the largest and most luxurious of life.

II

ANDOVER LIFE AND PEOPLE

ANDOVER is — or Andover was — like the lady to whom Steele gave immortality in the finest and most famous epigram ever offered to woman.

To have loved Andover; to have been born in Andover — I am brought up short, in these notes, by the sudden recollection that I was *not* born in Andover. It has always been so difficult to believe it, that I am liable any day to forget it; but the facts compel me to infer that I was born within a mile of the State House. I must have become a citizen of Andover at the age of three, when my father resigned his Boston pulpit for the professorship of Rhetoric and Homiletics in Andover Seminary. I remember distinctly our arrival at the white mansion with the large, handsome grounds, the distant and mysterious grove, the rotund horse-chestnut trees, venerable and solemn, nearly a century old — to this day a horse-chestnut always seems to me like a theological trustee — and the sweep of playground so vast, so soft, so green, so fra-

grant, so clean, that the baby cockney ran imperiously to her father and demanded that he go build her a brick sidewalk to play upon.

What, I wonder, may be the earliest act of memory on record? Mine is not at all unusual — dating only to two and a half years; at which time I clearly remember being knocked down by my dog, in my father's area in Boston, and being crowed over by a rooster of abnormal proportions who towered between me and the sky, a dragon in size and capabilities.

My father always maintained that he distinctly remembered hearing the death of Napoleon announced in his presence when he was one year and a half old.

Is the humiliating difference between the instinctive selection of Napoleon and that of the rooster one of temperament or sex? In either case, it is significant enough to lead one to drop the subject.

Next to having been born in a university town, comes the advantage — if it be an advantage — of having spent one's youth there. Mr. Howells says that he must be a dull fellow who does not, at some time or other, hate his native village; and I must confess that I have not, at all stages of my life, held my present opinion of Andover. There have been times when her gentle indifference to the preoccupations of the

PROFESSOR AUSTIN PHELPS' HOUSE, ANDOVER

world has stung me, as all serenity stings restlessness. There have been times when the inevitable limitations of her horizon have seemed as familiar as the coffin-lid to the dead.

There was an epoch when her theology — But, nevertheless, I certainly look back upon Andover Hill with a very real pleasure and heartfelt sense of debt.

It has been particularly asked of me to give some form to my recollections of a phase of local life which is now so obviously passing away that it has a certain historical interest.

That Andover remains upon the map of Massachusetts yet, one does not dispute; but the Andover of New England theology — the Andover of a peculiar people, the Andover that held herself apart from the world and all that was therein — will soon become an interesting wraith.

The life of a professor's daughter in a university town is always a little different from the lives of other girls; but the difference seems to me — unless she be by nature entirely alien to it — in favor of the girl. Were I to sum in one word my impressions of the influences of Andover life upon a robust young mind and heart, I should call them *gentle*.

As soon as we began to think, we saw a community engaged in studying thought. As soon

as we began to feel, we were aware of a neighborhood that did not feel superficially; at least, in certain higher directions. When we began to ask the "questions of life," which all intelligent young people ask sooner or later, we found ourselves in a village of three institutions and their dependencies committed to the pursuit of an ideal of education for which no amount of later, or what we call broader, training ever gives us any better word than Christian.

Such things tell. Andover girls did not waltz, or suffer summer engagements at Bar Harbor, a new one every year; neither did they read Ibsen or yellow novels; nor did they handle the French stories that are hidden from parents, though they were excellent French scholars in their day.

I do not even know that one can call them more "serious" than their city sisters; for we were a merry lot, at least, *my* lot were. But they were, I believe, especially open-hearted, gentle-minded girls.

If they were "out of the world" to a certain extent, they were, to another, out of the evil of it. As I look back upon the little drama between twelve and twenty, — I might rather say, between two and twenty, — Andover young people seem to me to have been as truly and nat-

urally innocent as one may meet anywhere in the world. Some of these private records of girl-history were so white, so clear, so sweet, that to read them would be like watching a morning-glory open. The world is full, thank Heaven, of lovely girls ; but though other forms or phases of gentle society claim their full quota, I never saw a lovelier than those I knew on Andover Hill.

One terrible tragedy, indeed, befell our little "set;" for we had our sets in Andover as well as they of Newport or New York.

A high-bred girl of exceptional beauty was furtively kissed one evening by a daring boy (not a native of Andover, I hasten to explain), and the furore which followed this unprecedented enormity it would be impossible to describe to a member of more complicated circles of society. Fancy the reception given such a commonplace at any of our fashionable summer resorts to-day!

On Andover Hill the event was a moral cataclysm. Andover girls were country girls, but not of rustic (any more than of metropolitan) social training. Which of them would have suffered an Academy boy, walking home with her from a lecture or a prayer-meeting, any little privilege which he might not have taken in her father's house and with her mother's

knowledge? I never knew one. The case of which I speak was historic, and as far as I ever knew, unique, and was that of a victim, not an offender.

The little beauty to whom this atrocity happened cried all night and all the next day; she was reported not to have stopped crying for twenty-six hours. Her pretty face grew wan and haggard. She was too ill to go to her lessons.

The teachers — to whom she had promptly related the circumstance — condoled with her; the entire school vowed to avenge her; we were a score of as disturbed and indignant girls as ever wept over woman's wrongs or scorned a man's depravity.

Yet, for aught I know to the contrary, this abandoned young man may have grown up to become a virtuous member of society, possibly even an exemplary husband and father. I have never been able to trace his history; probably the moral repulsion was too great.

Yet they were no prigs, for their innocence! Andover girls, in the best and brightest sense of the word, led a gay life.

The preponderance of young men on the Hill gave more than ample opportunity for well-mannered good times; and we made the most of them.

Legends of the feminine triumphs of past generations were handed breathlessly down to us, and cherished with awe. A lady of the village, said to have been once very handsome, was credibly reported to have refused nineteen offers of marriage. Another, still plainly beautiful, was known to have received and declined the suits of nine theologues in one winter. Neither of these ladies married. We watched their whitening hairs and serene faces with a certain pride of sex, not easily to be understood by a man. When we began to think how many times they *might* have married, the subject assumed sensational proportions. In fact, the maiden ladies of Andover always, I fancied, regarded each other with a peculiar sense of peace. Each knew — and knew that the rest knew — that it was (to use the Andover phraseology) not of predestination or foreordination, but of free will absolute, that an Andover girl passed through life alone. This little social fact, which is undoubtedly true of most, if not all, university towns, had mingled effects upon impressionable girls ; for the proportion of masculine society was almost Western in its munificence.

Perhaps it is my duty to say just here that, if honestly put to the question, I should admit that this proportion was almost too munificent

for the methods of education then — and still to an extent now — in vogue.

A large Academy for boys, and a flourishing Seminary for young men, set across the village streets from two lively girls' schools, gave to one observer of this little scholastic world her first argument for co-education.

I am confident that if the boys who serenaded (right manfully) under the windows of Abbot Academy or of "The Nunnery," or who found their lady's colors on the bouquets that were tossed from balconies of professors' houses, had been put, class to class, in competition with us, they would have wasted less time upon us ; and I could not deny that if the girls who cut little holes in their fans through which one could look, undetected and unreproved, at one's favorite Academy boy, on some public occasion, had been preparing to meet or pass that boy at Euclid or Xenophon recitation next morning, he would have occupied less of their fancy. Intellectual competition is simpler, severer, and more wholesome than the unmitigated social plane ; and a mingling of the two may be found calculated to produce the happiest results.

"Poor souls!" said a Boston lady once to me, upon my alluding to a certain literary club which was at that time occupying the enthusiasm of the Hill. "Poor souls! I suppose they

are so starved for society!" We can fancy the amusement with which this comment would have been received if it had been repeated — but it never was repeated till this moment — in Andover.

For Andover had her social life, and knew no better, for the most part, than to enjoy it. It is true that many of her diversions took on that religious or academic character natural to the place. Of village parish life we knew nothing, for our chapel was, like others of its kind, rather an exclusive little place of worship. We were ignorant of pastoral visits, deacons, parochial gossip, church fairs, and what Professor Park used to call "the doughnut business;" and, though we cultivated a weekly prayer-meeting in the lecture-room, I think its chief usefulness was as a training-school for theological students whose early efforts at public exhortation (poor fellows!) quaveringly besought their professors to grow in grace, and admonished the families of the Faculty circle to repent.

But we had our lectures and our concerts — quite distinct, as orthodox circles will understand, from those missionary festivals which went, I never discovered why, by the name of Monthly Concerts — and our Porter Rhets. I believe this cipher stood for Porter Rhetorical; and research, if pushed far enough, would de-

velop the fact that Porter indicated a dead professor who once founded a chair and a debating society for young men. Then we had our anniversaries and our exhibitions, when we got ourselves into our organdie muslins or best coats, and listened to the boys spouting Greek and Latin orations in the old, red brick Academy, and heard the theological students — but here this reporter is forced to pause. I suppose I ought to be ashamed of it, but the fact is, that I never attended an anniversary exercise of the Seminary in my life. It would be difficult to say why. I think my reluctance consisted in an abnormal objection to Trustees. So far as I know, they were an innocent set of men, of good reputations and quite harmless. But I certainly acquired, at a very early age, an antipathy to this class of Americans, from which I have never recovered.

Our anniversaries occurred, according to the barbaric custom of the times, in the hottest heat of August ; and if there be a hotter place in Massachusetts than Andover was, I have yet to simmer in it. Our houses were, of course, thrown open, and crowded to the shingles.

I remember once sharing my tiny room with a little guest who would not have the window open, though the thermometer had stood above ninety day and night for a week ; and because

she was a trustee's daughter, I must not complain. Perhaps this experience emphasized a natural lack of sympathy with her father.

At all events, I cherished a hidden antagonism to these excellent and useful men, of which I make this late and public confession. It seemed to me that everybody in Andover was afraid of them. I "took it out" in the cordial defiance of a born rebel.

Then we had our tea-parties — theological, of course, — when the students came to tea in alphabetical order; and the professor told his best stories; and the ladies of the family were expected to keep more or less quiet while the gentlemen talked. But this, I should say, was of the earlier time.

And, of course, we had the occasional supply; and as for the clerical guest, in some shape he was always with us.

I remember the shocked expression on the face of a not very eminent minister, because I joined in the conversation when, in the absence of my father's wife, the new mother, it fell to me to take the head of the table. It was truly a stimulating conversation, intellectual, and, like all clerical conversation, vivaciously amusing; and it swept me in, unconsciously. I think this occurred after I had written "The Gates Ajar."

This good man has since become an earnest anti-suffragist and opposer of the movement for the higher education of women. I can only hope he does not owe his dismal convictions to the moral jar received on that occasion; and I regret to learn that his daughter has been forbidden to go to college. I ought in justice to add that I find I do not think of this guest as a representative of his class.

We had, too, our levees — that was the word; by it one meant what is now called a reception. I have been told that my mother, who was a woman of marked social tastes and gifts, oppressed by the lack of variety in Andover life, originated this innocent form of dissipation.

These festivities, like others in academic towns, were democratic to a degree amusing or inspiring, according to the temperament of the spectator.

The professors' brilliantly-lighted drawing-rooms were thrown open to the students and families of the Hill. Distinguished men jostled the Academy boy who built the furnace fire to pay for his education, and who might be found on the faculty some day, in his turn, or might himself acquire an enviable and well-earned celebrity.

Eminent guests from out of town stood elbow to elbow with poor theologues destined to the

missionary field, and pathetically observing the Andover levee as one of the last occasions of civilized gayety in which it might be theirs to share. Ladies from Beacon Street or from New York might be seen chatting with some gentle figure in black, one of those widowed and brave women whose struggles to sustain life and educate their children by boarding students form so large a part of the pathos of academic towns.

One such I knew who met on one of these occasions a member of the club for which she provided. The lady was charming, well-dressed, well-mannered.

The young man, innocent of linen, had appeared at the levee in a gray flannel shirt. Introductions passed. The lady bowed.

"I am happy," stammered the poor fellow, "I am happy to meet the woman who cooks our victuals."

If it be asked, Why educate a man like that for the Christian ministry? — but it was *not* asked. Like all monstrosities, he grew without permission.

Let us hasten to call him the exception that he was to what, on the whole, was (in those days) a fair, wholesome rule of theological selection. The professor's eyes flashed when he heard the story.

"I have never approved," I think he said, "of the Special Course."

For the professor believed in no short-cut to the pulpit; but pleaded for all the education, all the opportunity, all the culture, all the gifts, all the graces possible to a man's privilege or energy, whereby to fit him to preach the Christian religion. But, like other professors, he could not always have his way.

It ought to be said, perhaps, that, beside the self-made or self-making man, there always sat upon the old benches in the lecture-room a certain proportion of gentlemen born and bred to ease and affluence, who had chosen their life's work from motives which were, at least, as much to be respected as the struggles of the converted newsboy or the penitent expressman.

Take her at her dullest, I think we were very fond of Andover; and though we dutifully improved our opportunities to present ourselves in other circles of society, yet, like fisher-folk or mountain-folk, we were always uneasy away from home. I remember on my first visit to New York or Boston — and this although my father was with me — quietly crying my eyes out behind the tall, embroidered screen which the hostess moved before the grate, because the fire-light made me so homesick. Who forgets his first attack of nostalgia? Alas! so far

as this recorder is concerned, the first was too far from the last. For I am cursed (or blessed) with a love of home so inevitable and so passionate as to be nothing less than ridiculous to my day and generation — a day of rovers, a generation of shawl-straps and valises.

"Do you never want to *stay?*" I once asked a distinguished author whose domestic uprootings were so frequent as to cause remark even in America.

"I am the most homesick man who ever lived," he responded sadly. "If I only pass a night in a sleeping-car, I hate to leave my berth."

"You must have cultivated society in Andover," an eminent Cambridge writer once said to me, with more sincerity of tone than was to be expected of the Cambridge accent as addressed to the Andover fact. I was young then, and I remember to have answered, honestly enough, but with what must have struck this superior man as unpardonable flippancy: —

"Oh, but one gets tired of seeing only cultivated people!"

I have thought of it sometimes since, when, in other surroundings, the memory of that peaceful, scholarly life has returned poignantly to me.

When one can "run in" any day to homes like those on that quiet and conscientious Hill,

one may not do it; but when one cannot, one appreciates their high and gentle influence.

One of the historic figures of my day in Andover was Professor Park. Equally eminent both as a preacher and as a theologian, his fame was great in Zion; and "the world" itself had knowledge of him, and did him honor.

He was a striking figure in the days which were the best of Andover. He was unquestionably a genius; the fact that it was a kind of genius for which the temper of our times is soon likely to find declining uses gives some especial interest to his name.

The appearances are that he will be the last of his type, once so powerful and still so venerable in New England history. He wears (for he is yet living) the dignity of a closing cycle; there is something sad and grand about his individualism, as there is about the last great chief of a tribe or the last king of a dynasty.

In his youth he was the progressive of evangelical theology. In his age he stands the proud and reticent conservative, the now silent representative of a departed glory, a departed severity — and, we must admit, of a departed strength — from which the theology of our times has melted away. Like other men in such positions, he has had battles to fight, and he has fought them; enemies to make, and he

has made them. How can he keep them? He is growing old so gently and so kindly! Ardent friends and worshiping admirers he has always had, and kept, and deserved.

A lady well known among the writers of our day, herself a professor's daughter from a New England college town, happened once to be talking with me in a lonely hour and in a mood of confidence.

"Oh," she cried, "it seems some of these desolate nights as if I *must* go home and sit watching for my father to come back from faculty meeting!"

But the tears smote her face, and she turned away. I knew that she had been her dead father's idol, and he hers.

To her listener what a panorama in those two words: "Faculty meeting!"

Every professor's daughter, every woman from a university family, can see it all. The whole scholastic and domestic, studious and tender life comes back. Faculty meeting! We wait for the tired professor who had the latest difference to settle with his colleagues, or the newest breach to soothe, or the favorite move to push; how late he is! He comes in softly, haggard and spent, closing the door quietly so that no one shall be wakened by this midnight dissipation. The woman who loves him most

anxiously — be it wife or be it daughter — is waiting for him. Perhaps there is a little whispered sympathy for the trouble in the faculty which he does not tell. Perhaps there is a little expedition to the pantry for a midnight lunch.

My first recollections of Professor Park give me his tall, gaunt, but well-proportioned figure striding up and down the gravel walks in front of the house, two hours before time for faculty meeting, in solemn conclave with my father. The two were friends — barring those interludes common to all faculties, when professional differences are in the foreground — and the pacing of their united feet might have worn Andover Hill through to the central fires. For years I cultivated an objection to Professor Park as being the chief visible reason why we had to wait for supper.

I remember his celebrated sermons quite well. The chapel was always thronged, and — as there were no particular fire-laws in those days on Andover Hill — the aisles brimmed over when it was known that Professor Park or Professor Phelps was to preach. I think I usually began with a little jealous counting of the audience, lest it should prove bigger than my father's; but even a child could not long listen to Professor Park and not forget her small affairs, and all affairs except the eloquence of the man.

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Great, I believe it was. Certain distinguished sermons had their popular names, as "The Judas Sermon," or "The Peter Sermon," and drew their admirers accordingly. He was a man of marked emotional nature, which he often found it hard to control. A skeptical critic might have wondered whether the tears welled, or the face broke, or the voice trembled, always just at the right moment, from pure spontaneity. But those who knew the preacher personally never doubted the genuineness of the feeling that swept and carried orator and hearers down. We do not hear such sermons now.

Professor Park has always been a man of social ease and wit. The last time I saw him, at the age of eighty-five, in his house in Andover, I thought, one need not say, "has been;" and to recall his brilliant talk that day gives me hesitation over the past tense of this reminiscence. On the whole, with the exception of Doctor Holmes, I think I should call Professor Park the best converser, — at least among eminent *men* — whom I have ever met.

He has always been a man very sensitive to the intellectual values of life, and fully inclined perhaps to approach the spiritual through those. It is easy to misunderstand a religious teacher of this temperament, and his admiring students may have sometimes done so.

One in particular I remember to have heard of who neglected the lecture-room to cultivate upon his own responsibility the mission work of what was known as Abbott Village. To the Christian socialism of our day, the misery of factory life might seem as important for the future clergyman as the system of theology regnant in his particular seminary — but that was not the fashion of the time ; at all events, the man was a student under the professor's orders, and the orders were, Keep to the curriculum ; and I can but think that the professor was right when he caustically said : —

"That —— is wasting his seminary course in what *he calls doing good !*"

Sometimes, too, the students used to beg off to go on book-agencies, or to prosecute other forms of money-making ; and of one such Professor Park was heard to say that he "sacrificed his education to get the means of paying for it."

I am indebted to Professor Park for this : "Professor Stuart and myself were reluctant to release them from their studies. Professor Stuart remarked of one student that he got excused *every* Saturday for the purpose of going home for a *week*, and always stayed a *fortnight*."

The last time that I saw Professor Park he told me a good story. It concerned the days of his prime, when he had been preaching

somewhere — in Boston or New York, I think — and after the audience was dismissed a man lingered and approached him.

"Sir," said the stranger, "I am under great obligations to you. Your discourse has moved me greatly. I can truly say that I believe I shall owe the salvation of my soul to you. I wish to offer, sir, to the seminary with which you are connected, a slight tribute of my admiration for and indebtedness to you." The gentleman drew out his purse.

"I waited, breathless," said Professor Park, with his own tremendous solemnity of manner; "I awaited the tribute of that grateful man. At what price did he value his soul? I anticipated a contribution for the seminary which it would be a privilege to offer. At what rate did my converted hearer price his soul? — Hundreds? Thousands? Tens of thousands? With indescribable dignity the man handed to me — a five-dollar bill!"

III

AT SCHOOL

PERHAPS no one has ever denied, or, more definitely, has ever wished to deny, that Andover society consisted largely of people with obvious religious convictions; and that her visitors were chiefly of an orthodox congregational turn of mind. I do not remember that we ever saw any reason for regret in this "feature" of the Hill. It is true, however, that a dash of the world's people made their way among us.

I remember certain appearances of Ralph Waldo Emerson. If I am correct about it, he had been persuaded by some emancipated and daring mind to give us several lectures.

He was my father's guest on one of these occasions, and I met him for the first time then. Emerson seemed to me — not to speak disrespectfully — in a much muddled state of his distinguished mind, on Andover Hill. His blazing seer's gaze took us all in, politely; it burned straight on, with its own philosophic fire; but it wore, at moments, a puzzled softness.

His clear-cut, sarcastic lips sought to assume

the well-bred curves of conformity to the environment of entertainers who valued him so far as to demand a series of his own lectures; but the cynic of his temperamental revolt from us, or, to be exact, from the thing which he supposed us to be, lurked in every line of his memorable face.

By the way, what a look of the eagle it had!

The poet — I was about to say the pagan poet — quickly recognized, to a degree, that he was not among a group of barbarians; and I remember the marked respect with which he observed my father's noble head and countenance, and the attention with which he listened to the low, perfectly modulated voice of his host. But Mr. Emerson was accustomed to do the talking himself; this occasion proved no exception. Quite promptly, I remember, he set adrift upon the sea of Alcott.

Now, we had heard of Mr. Alcott in Andover, it is true, but we did not look upon him exactly through Mr. Emerson's marine-glass; and, though the professor did his hospitable best to sustain his end of the conversation, it swayed off gracefully into monologue. We listened deferentially while the philosopher pronounced Bronson Alcott the greatest mind of our day — I think he said the greatest since Plato. He was capable of it, in moments of

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his own exaltation. I thought I detected a twinkle in my father's blue eye; but the fine curve of his lips remained politely closed; and our distinguished guest spoke on.

There was something noble about this ardent way of appreciating his friends, and Emerson was distinguished for it, among those who knew him well.

Publishers understood that his literary judgment was touchingly warped by his personal admirations. He would offer some impossible manuscript as the work of dawning genius; it would be politely received, and filed in the rejected pigeon-holes. Who knows what the great man thought when his friend's poem failed to see the light of the market?

On this particular occasion the conversation changed to Browning. Now, the professor was not a member of a Browning class; and here, again, his attitude towards the subject was one of well-mannered respect rather than of abandoned enthusiasm. (Had it only been Wordsworth!) A lady was present, young, and of the Browningesque temperament. Mr. Emerson expressed himself finely to the effect that there was something outside of ourselves about Browning — that we might not always grasp him — that he seemed, at times, to require an extra sense.

"Is it not because he touches our extra moods?" asked the lady. The poet's face turned towards her quickly; he had not noticed her before; a subtle change touched his expression, as if he would have liked to say: For the first time since this subject was introduced in this Calvinistic drawing-room, I find myself understood.

It chanced that we had a Chaucer Club in Andover at that time; a small company, severely selected, not to flirt or to chat, but to work. We had studied hard for a year, and most of us had gone Chaucer mad. This present writer was the unfortunate exception to that idolatrous enthusiasm, and — meeting Mr. Emerson at another time — took modest occasion in answer to a remark of his to say something of the sort.

"Chaucer interests me, certainly, but I cannot make myself feel as the others do. He does not take hold of my nature. He is too far back. I am afraid I am too much of a modern. It is a pity, I know."

"It *is* a pity," observed Mr. Emerson. "What would you read? The 'Morning Advertiser'?" The Chaucer Club glared at me in what, I must say, I felt to be unholy triumph.

Not a glance of sympathy reached me, where I sat, demolished before the rebuke of the great

man. I distinctly heard a chuckle from a feminine member. Yet, what had the dissenter done, or tried to do? Only to proffer common honesty in a little matter where affectation would have been the flowery way; and I must say that I have never loved the Father of English Poetry any better for this episode.

The point, however, at which I am coming is the effect wrought upon Mr. Emerson's mind by the history of that club. It seemed to us disproportionate to the occasion that he should feel and manifest so much surprise at our existence. This he did, more than once, and with a genuineness not to be mistaken.

That an organization for the study of Chaucer could subsist on Andover Hill, he could not understand. What he thought us, or thought about us, who can say? He seemed as much taken aback as if he had found a tribe of Cherokees studying onomatopœia in English verse.

"A *Chaucer* club! In *Andover?*" he repeated. The seer was perplexed.

So far had I written, out of that inner consciousness, which may be right or may be wrong, when it occurred to me to test my little profile sketch of this great man by the exact method; and I went for the first and only time in my life to Concord.

On a grim February day I drove through the

icy and sloppy streets of a village on the northern railroad where winter holds on so much harder than it does in our Garden City of the southern side, and was graciously admitted to the philosopher's study. I feel compelled to say that the simplicity and serenity of that silent room touched and instructed me. The absence of luxuries, the severity of comforts, the plain, scholarly atmosphere of the spot in which this great man asked for so little and achieved so much, impressed me strongly. Our Andover life seemed complex beside that Concord study. I reread my interpretation of Mr. Emerson with a definite doubt whether I ought not to rewrite it; — it seemed to me so sure that he who lived and wrought in that northeast front room in that white house among the Concord pines must have been the simplest and gentlest of men, and might have given to Andover Hill something besides that kind of attention which, it seemed to me, was concentrated like a burning-glass upon us.

Of course, whenever we found ourselves in forms of society not in harmony with our religious views, we were accustomed, in various ways, to meet with a predisposition similar to that which I thought I detected in Mr. Emerson. As a psychological study this has always interested me, just as one is interested in the

attitude of mind exhibited by the Old School physician towards the Homœopathist with whom he graduated at the Harvard Medical School. Possibly that graduate may have distinguished himself with the honors of the school; but as soon as he prescribes on the principles of Hahnemann, he is not to be adjudged capable of setting a collar-bone. By virtue of his therapeutic views he has become disqualified for professional recognition. So, by virtue of one's religious views, the man or woman of orthodox convictions, whatever one's proportion of personal culture, is regarded with a gentle superiority, as being of a class still enslaved in superstition, and therefore *per se* barbaric.

Put in undecorated language, this is about the sum and substance of a state of feeling which all intelligent evangelical Christians recognize perfectly in those who have preëmpted for themselves the claims belonging to what are called the liberal faiths.

On the other hand, one who is regarded as a little of a heretic from the sterner sects, may make the warmest friendships of a lifetime among "the world's people" — whom far be it from me to seem to dispossess of any of their manifold charms.

This brings me closely to a question which I am so often asked, either directly or indirectly,

that I cannot easily pass this Andover chapter by without some recognition of it.

What was, in very truth, the effect of such a religious training as Andover gave her children?

Curious impressions used to be afloat about us among people of easier faiths; often, I think, we were supposed to spend our youth paddling about in a lake of blue fire, or in committing the genealogies to memory, or in gasping beneath the agonies of religious revivals.

To be quite honest, I should say that I have not retained *all* the beliefs which I was taught — who does? But I have retained the profoundest respect for the way in which I was taught them; and I would rather have been taught what I was, *as* I was, and run whatever risks were involved in the process, than to have been taught much less, little, or nothing. An excess of religious education may have its unfortunate aspects. But a deficiency of it has worse.

It is true that, for little people, our little souls were a good deal agitated on the question of eternal salvation. We were taught that heaven and hell followed life and death; that the one place was "a desirable location," and the other too dreadful to be mentioned in ears polite; and that what Matthew Arnold calls "conduct" was the deciding thing. Not that we heard

much, until we grew old enough to read for ourselves, about Matthew Arnold; but we did hear a great deal about plain behavior — unselfishness, integrity, honor, sweet temper — the simple good morals of childhood.

We were taught, too, to respect prayer and the Christian Bible. In this last particular we never had at all an oppressive education.

My Sunday-school reminiscences are few and comfortable, and left me, chiefly, with the impression that Sunday-schools always studied Acts; for I do not recall any lessons given me by strolling theologues in any other — certainly none in any severer — portions of the Bible.

It was all very easy and pleasant, if not feverishly stimulating; and I am quite willing to match my Andover Sunday-school experiences with that of a Boston free-thinker's little daughter who came home and complained to her mother: "There is a dreadful girl put into our Sunday-school. I think, mamma, she is bad society for me. She says the Bible is exaggerated, and then she tickles my legs!"

I have said that we were taught to think something about our own "salvation;" and so we were, but not in a manner calculated to burden the good spirits of any but a very sensitive or introspective child. Personally, I may have dwelt on the idea, at times, more than was good

for my happiness; but certainly no more than was good for my character. The idea of character was at the basis of everything we did, or dreamed, or learned.

There is a scarecrow which "liberal" beliefs put together, hang in the field of public terror or ridicule, and call it Orthodoxy. Of this misshapen creature we knew nothing in Andover.

Of hell we heard sometimes, it is true, for Andover Seminary believed in it — though, be it said, much more comfortably in the days before this iron doctrine became the bridge of contention in the recent serious, theological battle which has devastated Andover. In my own case, I do not remember to have been shocked or threatened by this woful doctrine. I knew that my father believed in the everlasting misery of wicked people who could be good if they wanted to, but would not; and I was, of course, accustomed to accept the beliefs of a parent who represented everything that was tender, unselfish, pure, and noble, to my mind — in fact, who sustained to me the ideal of a fatherhood which gave me the best conception I shall ever get, in this world, of the Fatherhood of God. My father presented the interesting anomaly of a man holding, in one dark particular, a severe faith, but displaying in his private character rare tenderness and sweetness

of heart. He would go out of his way to save a crawling thing from death, or any sentient thing from pain. He took more trouble to give comfort or to prevent distress to every breathing creature that came within his reach, than any other person whom I have ever known. He had not the heart to witness heart-ache. It was impossible for him to endure the sight of a child's suffering. His sympathy was an extra sense, finer than eyesight, more exquisite than touch. Yet he did believe that absolute perversion of moral character went to its "own place," and bore the consequence of its own choice.

Once I told a lie (I was seven years old), and my father was a broken-hearted man. He told me *then* that liars went to hell. I do not remember to have heard any such personal application of the doctrine of eternal punishment before or since; and the fact made a life-long impression, to which I largely owe a personal preference for veracity. Yet, to analyze the scene strictly, I must say that it was not fear of torment which so moved me; it was the sight of that broken face. For my father wept — only when death visited the household did I ever see him cry again — and I stood melted and miserable before his anguish and his love. The devil and all his angels could not have

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punished into me the noble shame of that moment.

I have often been aware of being pitied by outsiders for the theological discipline which I was supposed to have received in Andover; but I must truthfully say that I have never been conscious of needing compassion in this respect. I was taught that God is Love, and Christ His Son is our Saviour; that the important thing in life was to be that kind of woman for which there is really, I find, no better word than Christian, and that the only road to this end was to be trodden by way of character. The ancient Persians (as we all know) were taught to hurl a javelin, ride a horse, and speak the truth.

I was taught that I should speak the truth, say my prayers, and consider other people; it was a wholesome, right-minded, invigorating training that we had, born of tenderness, educated conscience, and good sense, and I have lived to bless it in many troubled years.

What if we did lend a little too much romance now and then to our religious "experience"? It was better for us than some other kinds of romance to which we were quite as liable. What if I did "join the church" (entirely of my own urgent will, not of my father's preference or guiding) at the age of twelve,

when the great dogmas to which I was expected to subscribe could not possibly have any rational meaning for me? I remember how my father took me apart, and gently explained to me beforehand the clauses of the rather simple and truly beautiful chapel creed which he himself, I believe, had written to modernize and clarify the old one — I wonder if it were done at that very time? And I remember that it all seemed to me very easy and happy — signifying chiefly, that one meant to be a good girl, if possible. What if one did conduct a voluminous religious correspondence with the other professor's daughter, who put notes under the fence which divided our homes? We were none the worse girls for that. And we outgrew it, when the time came.

One thing, supremely, I may say that I learned from the Andover life, or, at least, from the Andover home. That was an everlasting scorn of worldliness — I do not mean in the religious sense of the word. That tendency to seek the lower motive, to do the secondary thing, to confuse sounds or appearances with values, which is covered by the word as we commonly use it, very early came to seem to me a way of looking at life for which I know no other term than underbred.

There is no better training for a young per-

son than to live in the atmosphere of a study — we did not call it a library, in my father's home. People of leisure who read might have libraries. People who worked among their books had studies.

The life of a student, with its gracious peace, its beauty, its dignity, seemed to me, as the life of social preoccupation or success may seem to children born to that penumbra, the inevitable thing.

As one grew to think out life for one's self, one came to perceive a width and sanctity in the choice of work — whether rhetoric or art, theology or sculpture, hydraulics or manufacture — but to *work*, to work hard, to see work steadily, and see it whole, was the way to be reputable. I think I always respected a good blacksmith more than a lady of leisure.

I know it took me a while to recover from a very youthful and amusing disinclination to rich people, which was surely never trained into me, but grew like the fruit of the horse-chestnut trees, ruggedly, of nature, and of Andover Hill; and which dropped away when its time came — just about as useless as the big, brown nuts which we cut into baskets and carved into trustees' faces for a mild November day, and then threw away.

When I came in due time to observe that

property and a hardened character were not identical, and that families of ease in which one might happen to visit were not deficient in education because their incomes were large — I think it was at first with a certain sense of surprise. It is impossible to convey to one differently reared the delicious naïveté of this state of mind.

Whatever the "personal peculiarities" of our youthful conceptions of life, as acquired at Andover, one thing is sure — that we grew into love of reality as naturally as the Seminary elms shook out their long, green plumes in May, and shed their delicate, yellow leaves in October.

I can remember no time when we did not instinctively despise a sham, and honor a genuine person, thing, or claim. In mere social pretension not built upon character, intelligence, education, or gentle birth, we felt no interest. I do not remember having been taught this, in so many words. It came without teaching.

My father taught me most things without text-books or lessons. By far the most important portion of what one calls education I owe to him; yet he never preached, or prosed, or played the pedagogue. He talked a great deal, not to us, but with us; we began to have conversation while we were still playing marbles

and dolls. I remember hours of discussion with him on some subject so large that the littleness of his interlocutor must have tried him sorely. Time and eternity, theology and science, literature and art, invention and discovery, came each in its turn; and, while I was still making burr baskets, or walking fences, or coasting (standing up) on what I was proud to claim as the biggest sled in town, down the longest hills, and on the fastest local record — I was fascinated with the wealth and variety which seem to have been the conditions of thought with him. I have never been more *interested* by anything in later life than I was in my father's conversation.

I never attended a public school of any kind — unless we except the Sunday-school that studied Acts — and when it came time for me to pass from the small to the large private schools of Andover, the same paternal comradeship continued to keep step with me. There was no college diploma for girls of my kind in my day; but we came as near to it as we could.

There was a private school in Andover, of wide reputation in its time, known to the irreverent as the "Nunnery," but bearing in professional circles the more stately name of Mrs. Edwards's School for Young Ladies. Two

day-scholars, as a marked favor to their parents, were admitted with the boarders elect; and of these two I was one. If I remember correctly, Professor Park and my father were among the advisers whose opinions had weight with the selection of our course of study, and I often wonder how, with their rather feudal views of women, these two wise men of Andover managed to approve so broad a curriculum.

Possibly the quiet and modest learned lady, our principal, had ideas of her own which no one could have suspected her of obtruding against the current of her times and environment; like other strong and gentle women she may have had her "way" when nobody thought so. At all events, we were taught wisely and well, in directions to which the fashionable girls' schools of the day did not lift an eye-lash.

I was an out-of-door girl, always into every little mischief of snow or rainfall, flower, field, or woods or ice; but in spite of skates and sleds and tramps and all the west winds from Wachusett that blew through me, soul and body, I was not strong; and my father found it necessary to oversee my methods of studying. Incidentally, I think, he influenced the choice of some of our text-books, and I remember that, with the exception of Greek and trigonometry —thought, in those days, to be beyond the

scope of the feminine intellect — we pursued the same curriculum that our brothers did at college. In some cases we had teachers who were then, or afterwards, college professors in their specialties; in all departments I think we were faithfully taught, and that our tastes and abilities were electively recognized.

I was not allowed, I remember, to inflict myself upon the piano for more than one hour a day; my father taking the ground that, as there was only so much of a girl, if she had not unusual musical gift and had less than usual physical vigor, she had better give the best of herself to her studies. I have often blessed him for this daring individualism; for, while the school "practice" went on about me, in the ordinary way, so many precious hours out of a day that was all too short for better things — I was learning my lessons quite comfortably, and getting plenty of fresh air and exercise between whiles.

I hasten to say that I was not at all a remarkable scholar. I cherished a taste for standing near the top of the class, somewhere, and always preferred rather to answer a question than to miss it; but this, I think, was pure pride, rather than an absorbing, intellectual passion. It was a wholesome pride, however, and served me a good turn.

At one epoch of history, so far back that I cannot date it, I remember to have been a scholar at Abbot Academy long enough to learn how to spell. Perhaps one ought to give the honor of this achievement where honor is due. When I observe the manner in which the superior sex is often turned out by masculine diplomas upon the world with the life-long need of a vest-pocket dictionary or a spelling-book, I cherish a respect for the method in which I was compelled to spell the English language. It was severe, no doubt. We stood in a class of forty, and lost our places for the misfit of a syllable, a letter, a definition, or even a stumble in elocution. I remember once losing the head of the class for saying: L-u-ux — Lux. It was a terrible blow, and I think of it yet with burning mortification on my cheeks.

In the "Nunnery" we were supposed to have learned how to spell. We studied what we called Mental Philosophy, to my unqualified delight; and Butler's Analogy, which I considered a luxury; and Shakespeare, whom I distantly but never intimately adored; Latin, to which dead language we gave seven years apiece out of our live girlhood; "Picciola" and "Undine," Racine, and Schiller, we dreamed over in the grove and the orchard; English literature is associated with the summer-house

and the grape arbor, with flecks of shade and glints of light, and a sense of unmistakable privilege. There was physiology, which was scarcely work, and astronomy, which I found so exhilarating that I fell ill over it. Alas! truth compels me to add that Mathematics, with a big *M* and stretching on through the books of Euclid, darkened my young horizon with dull despair; and that chemistry — but the facts are too humiliating to relate. My father used to say that all he ever got out of the pursuit of this useful science in his college days — and he was facile valedictorian — was the impression that there was a sub-acetate of something dissolved in a powder at the bottom.

All that I am able to recall of the study of "my brother's text-books," in this department, is that there was once a frightful odor in the laboratory, for which Professor Hitchcock and a glass jar and a chemical were responsible, and that I said, "At least, the name of *this* will remain with me to my dying hour." But what *was* the name of it? "Ask me no more."

In the department of history I can claim no results more calculated to reflect credit upon the little student who hated a poor recitation much, but facts and figures more. To the best of my belief, I can be said to have retained but two out of the long list of historic dates with

which my quivering-memory was duly and properly crowded.

I *do* know when America was discovered, because the year is inscribed over a spring in the seaside town where I have spent twenty summers, and I have driven past it on an average once a day for that period of time. And I can tell when Queen Elizabeth left this world, because Macaulay wrote a stately sentence: —

"In 1603 the Great Queen died."

It must have been the year when my father read De Quincey and Wordsworth to me on winter evenings that I happened for myself on Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The first little event opened for me, as distinctly as if I had never heard of it before, the world of letters as a Paradise from which no flaming sword could ever exile me; but the second revealed to me my own nature.

The Andover sunsets blazed behind Wachusett, and between the one window of my little room and the fine head of the mountain nothing intervened. The Andover elms held above lifted eyes arch upon arch of exquisite tracery, through which the far sky looked down like some noble thing that one could spend all one's life in trying to reach, and be happy just because it existed, whether one reached it or not.

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The paths in my father's great gardens burned white in the summer moonlights, and their shape was the shape of a mighty cross. The June lilies, yellow and sweet, lighted their soft lamps beside the cross — I was sixteen, and I read "Aurora Leigh."

A grown person may smile — but, no; no gentle-minded man or woman smiles at the dream of a girl. What has life to offer that is nobler in enthusiasm, more delicate, more ardent, more true to the unseen and the unsaid realities which govern our souls, or leave us sadder forever because they do not? There may be greater poems in our language than "Aurora Leigh," but it was many years before it was possible for me to suppose it; and none that ever saw the hospitality of fame could have done for that girl what that poem did at that time. I had never a good memory — but I think I could have repeated a large portion of it; and know that I often stood the test of haphazard examinations on the poem from half-scoffing friends, sometimes of the masculine persuasion. Each to his own; and what Shakespeare or the Latin Fathers might have done for some other impressionable girl, Mrs. Browning — forever bless her strong and gentle name! — did for me.

I owe to her, distinctly, the first visible aspi-

ration (ambition is too low a word) to do some honest, hard work of my own in the World Beautiful, and for it.

It is April, and it is the year 1861. It is a dull morning at school. The sky is gray. The girls are not in spirits — no one knows just why. The morning mail is late, and the Boston papers are tardily distributed. The older girls get them, and are reading the head-lines lazily, as girls do; not, in truth, caring much about a newspaper, but aware that one must be well-informed.

Suddenly, in the recitation room, where I am refreshing my accomplishments in some threatening lesson, I hear low murmurs and exclamations. Then a girl, very young and very pretty, catches the paper and whirls it overhead. With a laugh which tinkles through my ears to this day, she dances through the room and cries: —

"War 's begun! *War 's begun!*"

An older girl utters a cry of horror, and puts her hand upon the little creature's thoughtless lips.

"Oh, how *can* you?" so I hear the older girl. "Hush, hush, *hush!*"

IV

WAR-TIME: FIRST STORIES

One study in our curriculum at the Andover school I have omitted to mention in its place; but, of them all, it was the most characteristic, and would be most interesting to an outsider. Where else but in Andover would a group of a dozen and a half girls be put to studying theology? Yet this is precisely what we did. Not that we called our short hour with Professor Park on Tuesday evenings by that long word; nor did he. It was understood that we had Bible lessons.

But the gist of the matter was, that we were taught Professor Park's theology.

We had our note-books, like the students in the chapel lecture-rooms, and we took docile notes of the great man's views on the attributes of the Deity, on election and probation, on atonement and sanctification, on eschatology, and the rest.

Girls with pink ribbons at white throats, and girls with blue silk nets on their pretty hair, fluttered in like bees and butterflies, and settled

about the long dining-room table, at whose end, with a shade over his eyes to shield them from the light, the professor sat in a dark corner.

Thence he promulgated stately doctrines to those soft and dreaming woman-creatures, who did not care a maple-leaf whether we sinned in Adam, or whether the Trinity were separate as persons or as attributes; but who drew little portraits of their dearest Academy boys on the margins of their lecture-books, and passed these to their particular intimates in surreptitious interludes between doctrines.

What must have been the professor's private speculations on those Tuesday evenings? I had a certain sense of their probable nature, even then; and glanced furtively into the dark corner for glimpses of the distant, sarcastic smile which I felt must be carving itself upon the lines of his strong face. But I never caught him at it, not once. With the gravity befitting his awful topics, and with the dignity belonging to his chair and to his fame, the professor taught the butterflies, to the best of my knowledge and belief, as conscientiously as he did those black-coated beetles yonder, the theologues on the Seminary benches.

I ought to say just here, that, in a recent correspondence with Professor Park upon this matter, I found him more or less unconscious

of having been so generous with his theology to the girls. I am giving the pupil's impressions, not the teacher's recollections, of that Bible-class; and I can give no other. Of course, I may be mistaken, and am liable to correction; but my impressions are, that he gave us his system of theology pretty straight and very faithfully.

I cannot deny that I enjoyed those stern lessons. Not that I had any marked predilections towards theology, but I liked the psychology of it. I experienced my first appreciation of the nature and value of exact thought in that classroom, and it did me good, and not evil altogether. There I learned to reason with more patience than a school-girl may always care to suffer; and there I observed that the mysteries of time and eternity, whatever one might personally conclude about them, were material of reason.

In many a mental upheaval of later life, the basis of that theological training has made itself felt to me, as one feels rocks or stumps or solid things underfoot in the sickly swaying of wet sands. I may not always believe all I was taught, but what I was taught has helped me to what I believe. I certainly think of those theological lectures with unqualified gratitude.

The Tuesday evenings grow warm and warmer. The butterflies hover about in white muslins, and pretty little bows of summer colors glisten on bright heads as they bend over the doctrines, around the long table. On the screens of the open windows the June beetles knock their heads, like theologues who wish they could get in. There is a moon without. Visions of possible forbidden ecstasies of strolls under the arches of the Seminary elms with the bravest boy in the Academy melt before the gentle minds, through which depravity, election, predestination, and justification are filing sternly. The professor's voice arises: —

"A sin is a wrong committed against God. God is an Infinite Being; therefore sin against Him is an infinite wrong. An infinite wrong against an Infinite Being deserves an infinite punishment"—

Now, the professor says that he has no recollection of ever having said this in the Bible-class; but there is the note-book of the girl's brain, stamped with the sentence for these thirty years!

"I have sometimes quoted it at the Seminary," he writes, "for the purpose of exposing the impropriety of it. I do not think any professor ever quoted the statement, without adding that it is untenable. The Ando-

ver argument was "[1] — He adds the proper controversial language, which, it seems, went solidly out of my head. Tenable or untenable, my memory has clutched the stately syllogism.

Sharp upon the doctrines there falls across the silence and the sweetness of the moonlit Hill a strange and sudden sound. It is louder than theology. It is more solemn than the professor's system. Insistent, urging everything before it, — the toil of strenuous study, the fret of little trouble, and the dreams of dawning love, — the call stirs on. It is the beat of a drum.

The boys of old Phillips, with the down on their faces, and that eternal fire in their hearts which has burned upon the youth of all the ages when their country has commanded: "Die for me!" are drilling by moonlight.

The Academy Company is out in force, passing up and down the quiet, studious streets. The marching of their feet beats solemnly at the meeting of the paths where (like the gardens of the professors) the long walks of the

[1] "A sin once committed, always *deserves* punishment; and, as long as strict *Justice* is administered, the sin *must* be punished. Unless there be an Atonement, strict Justice *must* be administered; that is, Sin must be punished forever; but, on the ground of the Atonement, *Grace* may be administered instead of *Justice*, and then the sinner may be pardoned."

Seminary lawns form the shape of a mighty cross.

"An infinite wrong deserves an infinite punishment" — The theologian's voice falls solemnly. The girls turn their grave faces to the open windows. Silence helps the drum-beat, which lifts its cry to Heaven unimpeded; and the awful questions which it asks, what system of theology can answer?

. . . . . .

Andover was no more loyal, probably, than other New England villages; but perhaps the presence of so many young men helped to make her seem so to those who passed the years from 1861 to 1865 upon the Hill.

Theology and church history and exegesis and sacred rhetoric retreated from the foreground of that scholastic drama. The great Presence that is called War swept up and filled the scene.

Gray-haired men went to their lecture-rooms with bowed heads, the morning papers shaking in their hands. The accuracy of the Hebrew verb did not matter so much as it did last term. The homiletic uses or abuses of an applied text, the soundness of the new-school doctrine of free will, seemed less important to the universe than they were before the Flag went down on Sumter. Young eyes looked up at their in-

OLD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY BUILDINGS, ANDOVER

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structors mistily, for the dawn of utter sacrifice was in them. He was only an Academy boy yesterday, or a theologue; unknown, unnoticed, saying his lesson in Xenophon, taking his notes on the Nicene Creed; blamed a little, possibly, by his teacher or by his professor, for inattention.

To-day he comes proudly to the desk. His step rings on the old, bare floors that he will never tread again. "Sir, my father gives his permission. I enlist at once."

To-day he is a hero, and the hero's light is glorious on his face. To-day *he* is the teacher, and the professor learns lessons in his turn now. The boy whom he has lectured and scolded towers above him suddenly, a sacred thing to see. The old man stands uncovered before his pupil as they clasp hands and part.

The drum calls on, and the boys drill bravely — no boys' parade this, but awful earnest now. The ladies of Andover sew red braid upon blue flannel shirts, with which the Academy Company make simple uniform.

Then comes a morning when the professors cannot read the papers for the news they bring; but cover streaming eyes with trembling hands, and turn their faces. For the black day of the defeat at Bull Run has darkened the summer sky.

Andover does not sew for the missionaries now. Her poor married theologues must wait a little for their babies' dresses. Even the blue flannel shirts for the drill are forgotten. The chapel is turned into sudden, awful uses, of which the "pious founders" in their comfortable graves did never dream. For there the women of the Hill, staying for no prayer-meeting, and delaying to sing no hymns, pick lint and roll bandages and pack supplies for the field; and there they sacrifice and suffer, like women who knew no theology at all; and since it was not theirs to offer life to the teeth of shot and shell, they "gave their happiness instead."

. . . . . .

The first thing which I wrote, marking in any sense the beginning of what authors are accustomed to call their "literary career," — I dislike the phrase and wish we had a better,— was a war story.

As nearly as I can recall the facts, up to this time I had shown no literary tendency whatever, since the receipt of that check for two dollars and a half. Possibly the munificence of that honorarium seemed to me to satiate mortal ambition for years. It is true that, during my schooldays, I did perpetrate three full-grown novels in manuscript. My dearest particular

intimate and I shared in this exploit, and read our chapters to each other on Saturday afternoons.

I remember that the title of one of these "books" was "The Shadow of a Lifetime." It was a double title with a heroine to it, but I forget the lady's name, or even the nature of her particular shadow. The only thing that can be said about these three volumes is, that their youthful author had the saving sense not to try the Christian temper of a publisher with their perusal.

Yet, in truth, I have never regretted the precious portion of human existence spent in their creation; for I must have written off in that way a certain amount of apprenticeship which does, in some cases, find its way into type, and devastate the endurance of a patient public.

The war story of which I speak was distinctly the beginning of anything like genuine work for me. Mr. Alden tells me that it was published in January, 1864; but I think it must have been written a while before that, though not long, for its appearance quickly followed the receipt of the manuscript. The name of the story was "A Sacrifice Consumed." It was a very little story, not covering more than four or five pages in print. I sent it to "Har-

per's Magazine," without introduction or what young writers are accustomed to call "influence;" it was sent quite privately, without the knowledge of any friend. It was immediately accepted, and a prompt check for twenty-five dollars accompanied the acceptance. Even my father knew nothing of the venture until I carried the letter and enclosure to him. The pleasure on his expressive face was only equaled by its frank and unqualified astonishment. He read the story when it came out, and, I think, was touched by it, — it was a story of a poor and plain little dressmaker, who lost her lover in the army, — and his genuine emotion gave me a kind of awed elation, which has never been repeated in my experience. Ten hundred thousand unknown voices could not move me to the pride and pleasure which my father's first gentle word of approval gave to a girl who cared much to be loved and little to be praised; and the plaudits of a "career" were the last things in earth or heaven then occupying her mind.

Afterwards, I wrote with a distinct purpose, and, I think, quite steadily. I know that longer stories went, soon and often, to the old magazine, which never sent them back; and to which I am glad to pay the tribute of a gratitude that I have never outgrown. There was nothing of

the stuff that heroines and geniuses are made of in a shy and self-distrustful girl, who had no faith in her own capabilities, and, indeed, at that time the smallest possible amount of interest in the subject.

It may be a humiliating fact, but it is the truth, that had my first story been refused, or even the second or the third, I should have written no more.

For the opinion of important editors, and for the sacredness of market value in literary wares, as well as in professorships or cotton cloth, I had a kind of respect at which I sometimes wonder; for I do not recall that it was ever distinctly taught me. But, assuredly, if nobody had cared for my stories enough to print them, I should have been the last person to differ from the ruling opinion, and should have bought at Warren Draper's old Andover book-store no more cheap printer's paper on which to inscribe the girlish handwriting (with the pointed letters and the big capitals) which my father, with patient pains, had caused to be taught me by a queer old traveling master with an idea. Professor Phelps, by the way, had an exquisite chirography, which none of his children, to his evident disappointment, inherited.

But the editor of "Harper's" took everything I sent him; so the pointed letters and

the large capitals continued to flow towards his desk.

Long after I had achieved whatever success has been given me, this magazine returned me one of my stories — it was the only one in a lifetime. I think the editor then in power called it too tragic, or too something; it came out forthwith in the columns of another magazine that did not agree with him, and was afterwards issued, I think, in some sort of "classic" series of little books.

I was a little sorry, I know, at the time, for I had the most superstitious attachment for the magazine that, when "I was a stranger, took me in;" but it was probably necessary to break the record in this, as in all other forms of human happiness. A manuscript by any chance returned from any other quarter seemed a very inferior affliction.

Other magazines took their turn — the "Atlantic," I remember — in due course; but I shared the general awe of this magazine at that time prevailing in New England, and, having, possibly, more than my share of personal pride, did not very early venture to intrude my little risk upon that fearful lottery.

The first story of mine which appeared in the "Atlantic" was a fictitious narrative of certain psychical phenomena occurring in Connecticut,

and known to me, at first hand, to be authentic. I have yet to learn that the story attracted any attention from anybody more disinterested than those few friends of the sort who, in such cases, are wont to inquire, in tones more freighted with wonder than admiration: "What! Has she got into the '*Atlantic*'?"

The "Century" came in turn, when it came into being. To this delightful magazine I have always been, and always hope to be, a contributor.

I read, with a kind of hopeless envy, histories and legends of people of our craft who "do not write for money." It must be a pleasant experience to be able to cultivate so delicate a class of motives for the privilege of doing one's best to express one's thoughts to people who care for them. Personally, I have yet to breathe the ether of such a transcendent sphere. I am proud to say that I have always been a working woman, and always had to be; though I ought to add that I am sure the proposal that my father's allowance to his daughter should cease, did not come from the father.

When the first little story appeared in "Harper's Magazine," it occurred to me, with a throb of pleasure greater than I supposed then that life could hold, that I could take care of myself, and from that day to this I have done so.

One hesitates a little, even in autobiography, about saying precisely this. But when one remembers the thousands of women who find it too easy to be dependent on too heavily-weighted and too generous men, one hesitates no longer to say anything that may help those other thousands of women who stand on their own feet, and their own pluck, to understand how good a thing it is to be there.

Of all the methods of making a living open to educated people to-day, the profession of literature is, probably, the poorest in point of monetary returns. A couple of authors, counted successful as the world and the word go, said once, —

"We have earned less this year than the fisherman in the dory before the door of our summer home." Perhaps it had been a good year for Jack; possibly a poor one for those other fishers, who spread their brains and hearts — a piteous net — into the seas of life in quest of thought and feeling that the idlers on the banks may take a summer's fancy to. But the truth remains. A successful teacher, a clever manufacturer, a steady mechanic, may depend upon a better income in this country than the writer whose supposed wealth he envies, and whose books he reads on Sunday afternoons, if he is not too sleepy, or does not prefer his bicycle.

When we see (as we have actually done) our market-man driving by our old buggy and cheap horse on holidays, with a barouche and span, we enjoy the sight very much; and when I say (for the other occupant of the buggy has a little taste for two horses, which I am so plebeian as not to share, having never been able to understand why one is not enough for anybody), "But would you *be* the span-owner — for the span?" we see the end of the subject, and grow ravenously contented.

One cannot live by bread or magazine stories alone, as the young daughter of toil too soon found out. Like other writers, I did hack work. Of making Sunday-school books I scarcely found an end. I must have written over a dozen of them; I wince, sometimes, when I see their forgotten dates and titles in encyclopædias; but a better judgment tells me that one should not be ashamed of doing hard work honestly. I was not an artist at Sunday-school literature (there are such), and have often wondered why the religious publishing societies kept me at it so steadily and so long.

There were tales of piety and of mischief, of war and of home, of babies and of army nurses, of tomboys, and of girls who did their mending and obeyed their mothers.

The variety was the only thing I can recall

that was commendable about these little books, unless one except a considerable dash of fun.

One of them came back to me; it happened to be the only book I ever wrote that did — and when the Andover expressman brought in the square package, just before tea, I felt my heart stand still with mortification. Fortunately nobody saw the expressman. I always kept my ventures to myself, and did not, that I can remember, read any manuscript of mine to suffering relatives or friends before publication. Indeed, I carried on the writer's profession for many years as if it had been a burglar's.

At the earliest moment possible I got myself into my little room, and turned both keys upon myself and my rejected manuscript. But when I came to read the publisher's letter, I learned that hope still remained, a flickering torch, upon a darkened universe. That excellent man did not refuse the story, but raised objections to certain points or forms therein, to which he summoned my attention. The criticism called substantially for the rewriting of the book. I lighted my lamp, and, with the June beetles butting at my head, I wrote all night. At three o'clock in the morning I put the last sentence to the remodeled story — the whole was a matter of some three hundred and fifty pages of manuscript — and crawled to bed. At six I

stole out and found the expressman, that innocent and ignorant messenger of joy or woe. The revised manuscript reached the publisher by ten o'clock, and his letter of unconditional acceptance was in my hands before another tea-time.

I have never been in the habit of writing at night, having been early warned against this practice by the wisest of fathers (who notably failed to follow his own advice); and this almost solitary experience of the midnight oil remains as vivid as yesterday's sunset to me. My present opinion of that night's exploit is, that it signified an abnormal pride which might as well have received its due humiliation. But, at the time, it seemed to be the inevitable or even the creditable thing.

Sunday-school writers did books by sets in those days; perhaps they do still. And at least two such sets I provided to order, each of four volumes. Both of these, it so happens, have survived their day and generation — the Tiny books, we called them, and the Gypsy books. Only last year I was called upon to renew the copyright for Gypsy, a young person now thirty years old in type.

There is a certain poetic justice in this little circumstance, owing to the fact that I never *worked* harder in my life at anything than I

did upon those little books; for I had, madly enough, contracted to supply four within a year.

We had no vacations in those days; I knew nothing of hills or shore; but "spoke straight on" through the burning Andover summers. Our July and August thermometers used to stand up hard at over ninety degrees, day and night, for nearly a week at a time. The large white mansion was as comfortable as ceiled walls and back plaster could be in that furnace; but my own small room, on the sunny side of the house, was heated seven times hotter than endurance. Sometimes I got over an open register in a lower room, and wrote in the faint puffs of damp air that played with my misery. Sometimes I sat in the cellar itself; but it was rather dark, and one cherished a consciousness of mice. In the orchard or the grove, one's brains fricasseed quickly; in fact, all out-of-doors was a scene of bottomless torment worthy of a theology older and severer than Andover's. I am told that the Andover climate has improved of late years.

When the last chapter of the last book was done, it occurred to me to wonder whether I might ever be able to afford to get for a week or two where the thermometer went below ninety degrees in summer. But this was a wild

ELM ARCH, ANDOVER

and baseless dream, whose irrationality I quickly recognized. For such books as those into which I had been coining a year of my young strength and heart, I received the sum of one hundred dollars apiece. The "Gypsy" publisher was more munificent. He offered one hundred and fifty; a price which I accepted with incredible gratitude.

I mention these figures distinctly, with the cold-blooded view of dimming the rosy dreams of those young ladies and gentlemen with whom, if I may judge by their letters, our country seems to be brimming over.

"Will you read my poem?" "Won't you criticise my manuscript?" "I would like to forward my novel for your perusal." "I have sent you the copy of a rejected article of mine, on which I venture to ask" — etc., etc. "I have been told that all I need is influence." "My friends think my book shows genius; but I have no influence." "Will it trouble you too much to get this published for me?"

"Your influence" — and so on, and so on, run the piteous appeals which every successful author receives from the great unknown world of discouraged and perplexed young people who are mistaking the stir of youth or vanity, or the *ennui* of idleness, or the sting of poverty, for the solemn throes of power.

What can one do for them, whom no one but themselves can help? What can one say to them, when anything one says is sure to give pain or dishearten courage?

Write, if you *must;* not otherwise. Do not write, if you can earn a fair living at teaching or dressmaking, at electricity or hod-carrying. Make shoes, weed cabbages, survey land, keep house, make ice-cream, sell cake, climb a telephone pole. Nay, be a lightning-rod peddler or a book agent, before you set your heart upon it that you shall write for a living. Do anything honest, but do not write, unless God calls you, and publishers want you, and people read you, and editors claim you. Respect the market laws. Lean on nobody. Trust the common sense of an experienced publisher to know whether your manuscript is worth something or nothing. Do not depend on influence. Editors do not care a drop of ink for influence. What they want is good material, and the fresher it is, the better. An editor will pass by an old writer any day for an unknown and gifted new one, with power to say a good thing in a fresh way. Make your calling and election sure. Do not flirt with your pen. Emerson's phrase was, "toiling terribly." Nothing less will hint at the grinding drudgery of a life spent in living "by your brains."

Inspiration is all very well; but "genius is the infinite capacity for taking pains."

Living? It is more likely to be dying by your pen; despairing by your pen; burying hope and heart and youth and courage in your ink-stand.

Unless you are prepared to work like a slave at his galley, for the toss-up chance of a freedom which may be denied him when his work is done, do not write. There are some pleasant things about this way of spending a lifetime, but there are no easy ones.

There are privileges in it, but there are heart-ache, mortification, discouragement, and an eternal doubt.

Had one not better have made bread or picture-frames, run a motor, or invented a bicycle tire?

Time alone — perhaps one might say, eternity — can answer.

V

THE FALL OF THE PEMBERTON MILL: THE GATES AJAR

The town of Lawrence was three miles and a half from Andover. Up to the year 1860 we had considered Lawrence chiefly in the light of a place to drive to. To the girlish resources which could, in those days, only include a trip to Boston at the call of some fate too vast to be expected more than two or three times a year, Lawrence offered consolations in the shape of dry goods and restaurant ice-cream, and a slow, delicious drive in the family carryall through sand flats and pine woods, and past the largest bed of the sweetest violets that ever dared the blasts of a New England spring. To the pages of the gazetteer Lawrence would have been known as a manufacturing town of importance. Upon the map of our young fancy the great mills were sketched in lightly; we looked up from the restaurant ice-cream to see the "hands" pour out for dinner, a dark and restless, but a patient throng; used, in those days, to standing eleven hours and a quarter —

women and girls — at their looms, six days of the week, and making no audible complaints; for socialism had not reached Lawrence, and anarchy was content to bray in distant parts of the geography at which the factory people had not arrived when they left school.

Sometimes we counted the great mills as we drove up Essex Street — having come over the bridge by the roaring dam that tamed the proud Merrimac to spinning cotton — Pacific, Atlantic, Washington, Pemberton; but this was an idle, æsthetic pleasure. We did not think about the mill-people; they seemed as far from us as the coal-miners of a vague West, or the down-gatherers on the crags of shores whose names we did not think it worth while to remember. One January evening we were forced to think about the mills with curdling horror, which no one living in that locality when the tragedy happened will forget.

At five o'clock, the Pemberton Mills, all hands being at the time on duty, without a warning of the catastrophe sank to the ground.

At the erection of the factory a pillar with a defective core had passed careless inspectors. In technical language, the core had "floated" an eighth of an inch from its position. The weak spot in the too thin wall of the pillar had bided its time, and yielded. The roof, the walls,

the machinery fell upon seven hundred and fifty living men and women, and buried them. Most of these were rescued; but eighty-eight were killed. As the night came on, those watchers on Andover Hill who could not join the rescuing parties saw a strange and fearful light at the north.

Where we were used to watching the beautiful belt of the lighted mills blaze, — a zone of laughing fire from east to west, upon the horizon bar, — a red and awful glare went up. The mill had taken fire. A lantern, overturned in the hands of a man who was groping to save an imprisoned life, had flashed to the cotton, or the wool, or the oil with which the ruins were saturated. One of the historic conflagrations of New England resulted.

With blanching cheeks we listened to the whispers that told us how the mill-girls, caught in the ruins beyond hope of escape, began to sing. They were used to singing, poor things, at their looms, — mill-girls always are, — and their young souls took courage from the familiar sound of one another's voices. They sang the hymns and songs which they had learned in the schools and churches. No classical strains, no "music for music's sake," ascended from that furnace; no ditty of love or frolic; but the plain, religious outcries of the people: "Hea-

ven is my home," "Jesus, lover of my soul," and "Shall we gather at the river?" Voice after voice dropped. The fire raced on. A few brave girls sang still, —

> "Shall we gather at the river, . . .
> There to walk and worship ever?"

But the startled Merrimac rolled by, red as blood beneath the glare of the burning mills, and it was left to the fire and the river to finish the chorus.

At the time this tragedy occurred, I felt my share of its horror, like other people; but no more than that. My brother, being of the privileged sex, was sent over to see the scene; but I was not allowed to go.

Years after, I cannot say just how many, the half-effaced negative came back to form under the chemical of some new perception of the significance of human tragedy.

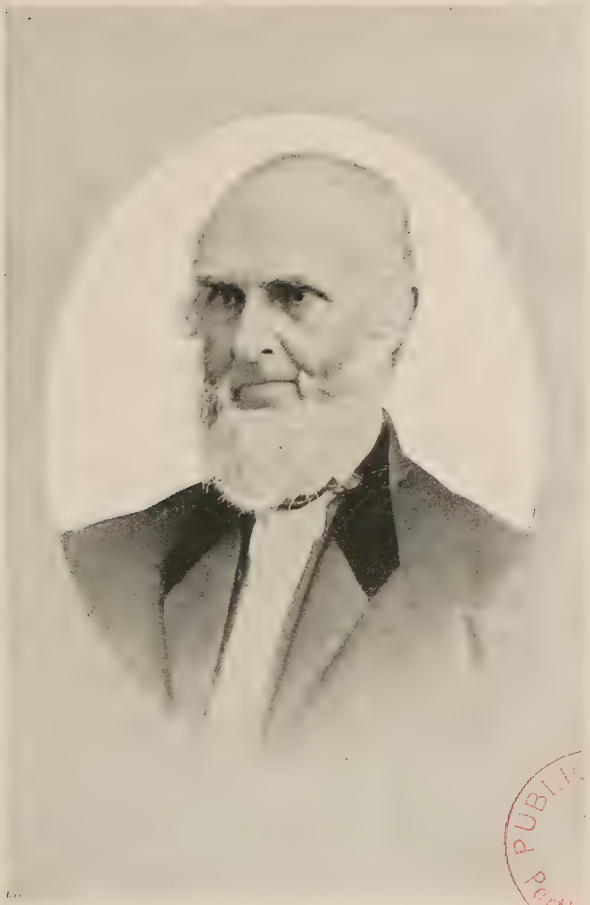
It occurred to me to use the event as the basis of a story. To this end I set forth to study the subject. I had heard nothing in those days about "material," and conscience in the use of it, and little enough about art. We did not talk about realism then. Of critical phraseology I knew nothing; and of critical standards only what I had observed by reading the best fiction. Poor novels and stories I did not read. I do not remember being forbidden

them; but, by that parental art finer than denial, they were absent from my convenience.

It needed no instruction in the canons of art, however, to teach me that to do a good thing, one must work hard for it. So I gave the best part of a month to the study of the Pemberton Mill tragedy, driving to Lawrence, and investigating every possible avenue of information left at that too long remove of time which might give the data. I visited the rebuilt mills, and studied the machinery. I consulted engineers and officials and physicians, newspaper men, and persons who had been in the mill at the time of its fall. I scoured the files of old local papers, and from these I took certain portions of names, actually involved in the catastrophe; though of course fictitiously used. When there was nothing left for me to learn upon the subject, I came home and wrote a little story called "The Tenth of January," and sent it to "The Atlantic Monthly," where it appeared in due time.

This story is of more interest to its author than it can possibly be now to any reader, because it distinctly marked for me the first recognition which I received from literary people.

Whittier the poet wrote me his first letter, after having read this story. It was soon fol-



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lowed by a kind note from Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Both these distinguished men said the pleasant thing which goes so far towards keeping the courage of young writers above sinking point, and which, to a self-distrustful nature, may be little less than a life-preserver. Both have done similar kindness to many other beginners in our calling; but none of these can have been more grateful for it, or more glad to say so, across this long width of time, than the writer of "The Tenth of January."

It was a defective enough little story, crude and young; I never glance at it without longing to write it over; but I cannot read it, to this day, without that physical distress which exceptional tragedy must produce in any sensitive organization; nor can I ever trust myself to hear it read by professional elocutionists. I attribute the success of the story entirely to the historic and unusual character of the catastrophe on whose movement it was built.

Of journalism, strictly speaking, I did nothing. But I often wrote for weekly denominational papers, to which I contributed those strictly secular articles so popular with the religious public. My main impression of them now is a pleasant sense of sitting out in the apple-trees in the wonderful Andover Junes,

and "noticing" new books with which Boston publishers kept me supplied; for whatever reason, the weeklies gave me all I could do at this sort of thing. In its course I formed some pleasant acquaintances; among others that of Jean Ingelow. I have never seen this poet, whom I honor now as much as I admired then; but charming little notes, and books of her own, with her autograph, reached me from time to time for years. I remember when "The Gates Ajar" appeared, that she frankly called it "Your most strange book."

This brings me to say: I have been so often and so urgently asked to publish some account of the history of this book, that perhaps I need crave no pardon of whatever readers these papers may command, for giving more of our space to the subject than it would otherwise occur to one to do to a book so long behind the day.

Of what we know as literary ambition, I believe myself to have been as destitute at that time as any girl who ever put pen to paper. I was absorbed in thought and feeling as far removed from the usual class of emotions or motives which move men and women to write, as Wachusett was from the June lilies burning beside the moonlit cross in my father's garden. Literary ambition is a good thing to possess;

and I do not at all suggest that I was superior to it, but simply apart from it. Of its pangs and ecstasies I knew little, and thought less.

I have been asked, possibly a thousand times, whether I looked upon that little book as in any sense the result of inspiration, whether what is called spiritualistic, or of any other sort. I have always promptly said "No" to this question. Yet sometimes I wonder if that convenient monosyllable in deed and truth covers the whole case.

When I remember just how the book came to be, perceive the consequences of its being, and recall the complete unconsciousness of the young author as to their probable nature, there are moments when I am fain to answer the question by asking another: "What do we mean by inspiration?"

That book grew so naturally, it was so inevitable, it was so unpremeditated, it came so plainly from that something not one's self which makes for uses in which one's self is extinguished, that there are times when it seems to me as if I had no more to do with the writing of it than the bough through which the wind cries, or the wave by means of which the tide rises.

The angel said unto me "Write!" and I wrote.

It is impossible to remember how or when the idea of the book first visited me. Its publication bears the date of 1869, but I am told that the exact time was in 1868; since publishers sometimes give to an Autumn book the date of the coming year. My impressions are that it may have been towards the close of 1864 that the work began; for there was work in it, more than its imperfect and youthful character might lead one ignorant of the art of book-making to suppose.

It was not until 1863 that I left school, being then just about at my nineteenth birthday. It is probable that the magazine stories and Sunday-school books and hack work occupied from one to two years without interruption; but I have no more temperament for dates in my own affairs than I have for those of history. At the most, I could not have been far from twenty when the book was written; possibly approaching twenty-one.

At that time, it will be remembered, our country was dark with sorrowing women. The regiments came home, but the mourners went about the streets.

The Grand Review passed through Washington; four hundred thousand ghosts of murdered men kept invisible march to the drum-beats, and lifted to the stained and tattered flags the

proud and unreturned gaze of the dead who have died in their glory.

Our gayest scenes were black with crape. The drawn faces of bereaved wife, mother, sister, and widowed girl showed piteously everywhere. Gray-haired parents knelt at the grave of the boy whose enviable fortune it was to be brought home in time to die in his mother's room. Towards the nameless mounds of Arlington, of Gettysburg, and the rest, the yearning of desolated homes went out in those waves of anguish which seem to choke the very air that the happier and more fortunate must breathe.

Is there not an actual, occult force in the existence of a general grief? It swells to a tide whose invisible flow covers all the little resistance of common, human joyousness. It is like a material miasma. The gayest man breathes it, if he breathe at all; and the most superficial cannot escape it.

Into that great world of woe my little book stole forth, trembling. So far as I can remember having had any "object" at all in its creation, I wished to say something that would comfort some few — I did not think at all about comforting many, not daring to suppose that incredible privilege possible — of the women whose misery crowded the land. The smoke

of their torment ascended, and the sky was blackened by it. I do not think I thought so much about the suffering of men — the fathers, the brothers, the sons — bereft ; but the women, — the helpless, outnumbering, unconsulted women ; they whom war trampled down, without a choice or protest ; the patient, limited, domestic women, who thought little, but loved much, and, loving, had lost all, — to them I would have spoken.

For it came to seem to me, as I pondered these things in my own heart, that even the best and kindest forms of our prevailing beliefs had nothing to say to an afflicted woman that could help her much. Creeds and commentaries and sermons were made by men. What tenderest of men knows how to comfort his own daughter when her heart is broken ? What can the doctrines do for the desolated by death ? They were chains of rusty iron, eating into raw hearts. The prayer of the preacher was not much better ; it sounded like the language of an unknown race to a despairing girl. Listen to the hymn. It falls like icicles on snow. Or, if it happen to be one of the old genuine outcries of the church, sprung from real human anguish or hope, it maddens the listener, and she flees from it, too sore a thing to bear the touch of holy music.

At this time, be it said, I had no interest at all in any especial movement for the peculiar needs of women as a class. I was reared in circles which did not concern themselves with those whom we should probably have called agitators. I was taught the old ideas of womanhood, in the old way, and had not to any important extent begun to resent them.

Perhaps I am wrong here. Individually, I may have begun to recoil from them, but only in a purely selfish, personal way, beyond which I had evolved neither theory nor conscience, much less the smallest tendency towards sympathy with any public movement of the question.

In the course of two or three years spent in exceptional solitude, I had read a good deal in the direction of my ruling thoughts and feeling, and came to the writing of my little book, not ignorant of what had been written for and by the mourning. The results of this reading, of course, went into the book, and seemed to me at the time by far the most useful part of it.

How the book grew, who can say? More of nature than of purpose, surely. It moved like a tear or a sigh or a prayer. In a sense I scarcely knew that I wrote it. Yet it signified labor and time, crude and young as it looks to me now; and often as I have wondered, from

my soul, why it has known the history that it has, I have at least a certain respect for it, myself, in that it did not represent shiftlessness or sloth, but steady and conscientious toil. There was not a page in it which had not been subjected to such study as the writer then knew how to offer to her manuscripts.

Every sentence had received the best attention which it was in the power of my inexperience and youth to give. I wrote and rewrote. The book was revised so many times that I could have said it by heart. The process of forming and writing "The Gates Ajar" lasted, I think, nearly two years.

I had no study or place to myself in those days; only the little room whose one window looked upon the garden cross, and which it was not expected would be warmed in winter.

The room contained no chimney, and, until I was sixteen, no fire for any purpose. At that time, it being supposed that some delicacy of the lungs had threatened serious results, my father, who always moved the sods beneath him and the skies above him to care for a sick child, had managed to insert a little stove into the room, to soften its chill when needed. But I did not have consumption, only life; and one was not expected to burn wood all day for private convenience in our furnace-heated house.

Was there not the great dining-room where the children studied?

It was not so long since I, too, had learned my lessons off the dining-room table, or in the corner by the register, that it should occur to any member of the family that these opportunities for privacy could not answer my needs.

Equally, it did not occur to me to ask for any abnormal luxuries. I therefore made the best of my conditions, though I do remember sorely longing for quiet.

This, at that time, in that house, it was impossible for me to compass. There was a growing family of noisy boys,—four of them,—of whom I was the only sister, as I was the oldest child. When the baby did not cry (I have always maintained that the baby cried pretty steadily both day and night, but this is a point upon which their mother and I have affectionately agreed to differ), the boys were shouting about the grounds, chasing each other through the large house, up and down the cellar stairs, and through the wide halls, a whirlwind of vigor and fun. They were merry, healthy boys, and everything was done to keep them so. I sometimes doubt if there are any happier children growing anywhere than the boys and girls of Andover used to be. I was very fond of the boys, and cherished no objection to their

privileges in the house. But when one went down, on a cold day, to the register, to write one's chapter on the nature of amusements in the life to come, and found the dining-room neatly laid out in the form of a church congregation, to which a certain proportion of brothers were enthusiastically performing the duties of an active pastor and parish, the environment was a definite check to inspiration.

I wonder if all Andover boys played at preaching? It certainly was the one sport in our house which never satiated.

Coming in one day, I remember, struggling with certain hopeless purposes of my own, for an afternoon's work, I found the dining-room chairs all nicely set in the order of pews; a table, ornamented with Bible and hymn-books, confronted them; behind it, on a cricket, towered the bigger brother, loudly holding forth. The little brother represented the audience — it was usually the little one who was forced to play this duller rôle — and, with open mouth, and with wriggling feet turned in on the rounds of the chair, absorbed as much exhortation as he could suffer.

"My text, brethren," said the little minister, "is, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.'" Pausing here to make a fit and full impression he solemnly proceeded: —

"My subject is, *God; Joseph; and Moses in the bulrushes!*"

Discouraged by the alarming breadth of the little preacher's topic, I fled upstairs again. There an inspiration did, indeed, strike me; for I remembered an old fur cape, or *pelisse*, of my mother's, out of fashion, but the warmer for that; and straightway I got me into it, and curled up, with my papers, on the chilly bed in the cold room, and went to work.

It seems to me that a good part of "The Gates Ajar" was written in that old fur cape. Often I stole up into the attic, or into some unfrequented closet, to escape the noise of the house while at work. I remember, too, writing sometimes in the barn, on the haymow. The book extended over a wide domestic topography.

I hasten to say that no person was to blame for inconveniences of whose existence I had never complained. Doubtless something would have been done to relieve them had I asked for it; or if the idea that my work could ever be of any consequence had occurred to any of us. Why should it? The girl who is never "domestic" is trial enough at her best. She cannot cook; she will not sew. She washes dishes Mondays and Tuesdays under protest, while the nurse and parlor maid are called off from

their natural avocations, and dusts the drawing-room with resentful obedience. She sits cutting out underclothes in the March vacations, when all the schools are closed, and when the heavy wagons from the distant farming region stick in the bottomless Andover mud in front of the professor's house. The big front door is opened, and the dismal, creaking sounds come in.

The kind and conscientious new mother, to whom I owe many other gentle lessons more valuable than this, teaches how necessary to a lady's education is a neat needle.

The girl does not deny this elemental fact; but her eyes wander away to the cold sky above the Andover mud, with passionate entreaty. To this day I cannot hear the thick chu-chunk! of heavy wheels on March mud without a sudden mechanical echo of that wild, young outcry: "Must I cut out underclothes forever? Must I go on tucking the broken end of the thread into the nick in the spool? Is *this* LIFE?"

I am more than conscious that I could not have been an easy girl to "bring up," and am sure that for whatever little difficulties beset the earlier time of my ventures as a writer, no person was in any fault. They were doubtless good for me, in their way. We all know that some of the greatest of brain-workers have se-

lected the poorest and barest of spots in which to study. Luxury and bric-à-brac come to easy natures or in easy years. The energy that very early learns to conquer difficulty is always worth its price.

I used, later, to hear in Boston the story of the gentleman who once took a friend to see the room of his son at Harvard College. The friend was a man of plain life, but of rich mental achievement. He glanced at the Persian rugs and costly draperies of the boy's quarters in silence.

"Well," cried the fond father, "don't you think my son has a pretty room?"

"Sir," said the visitor, with gentle candor, "*you 'll never raise a scholar on that carpet.*"

Out of my discomforts, which were small enough, grew one thing for which I have all my life been grateful — the formation of fixed habits of work.

I have seldom waited for inspiration before setting about a task to be done. Life is too short for that. Broken health has too often interrupted a regimen of study which ought to have been more continuous; but, so far as I may venture to offer an opinion from personal experience, I should say that the writers who would be wise to play hide and seek with their own moods are few.

According to my custom, I said nothing (so far as I can remember) to any person about the book.

It cannot be said that I had any hope of success with it; or that, in my most irrational dreams, anything like the consequences of its publication ever occurred to my fancy. But I did distinctly understand that I had set forth upon a venture totally dissimilar to the safe and respectable careers of my dozen Sunday-school books.

I am sometimes asked why it was that, having such a rare critic at first hand as my father, I did not more often submit my manuscripts to his judgment. It would be difficult to say precisely why. The professor of rhetoric was a very busy man; and at that time the illness which condemned him to thirty years of invalid suffering was beginning to make itself manifest. I can remember more often throwing down my pen to fly out and beg the children to be quiet in the garden while the sleepless man struggled for a few moments' rest in the daytime, or stealing on tiptoe to his locked door, at any hour of the night, to listen for signs of sudden illness or need of help; these things come back more easily than the desire to burden him with what I wrote.

Yet perhaps that abnormal pride, whose ex-

istence I have admitted, had quite as much to do with this restraint.

When a thing was published, then quickly to him with it! His sympathy and interest were unfailing, and his criticism only too gentle; though it could be a sword of flame when he chose to smite.

Unknown to himself, I had dedicated "The Gates Ajar" to him. In this dedication there was a slip in good English, or, at least, in such English as the professor wrote and spoke. I had used the word "nears" as a verb, instead of its proper synonym, "approaches." He read the dedication quietly, thanked me tenderly for it, and said nothing. It was left for me to find out my blunder for myself, as I did, in due time. He had not the heart to tell me of it then. Nor did he insinuate his consciousness that the dedication might seem to involve him — as it did in certain citadels of stupidity — in the views of the book.

The story was sent to its publishers, Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, and leisurely awaited their verdict. As I had written somewhat for their magazines, "The Atlantic" and "Our Young Folks," I did not come quite as a stranger. Still, the fate of the book hung upon a delicate scale. It was two years from the time the story went to its publishers before it appeared between

covers. How much of this period the author was kept in suspense I cannot remember; but, I think, some time. I have the impression that the disposal of the book, so far as that firm went, wavered for a while upon the decision of one man, whose wife shared the reading of the manuscript. "Take it," she said at last, decidedly; and the fiat went forth. The lady afterwards became a personal friend, and I hope I may not forfeit the treasure of her affection by this late and public recognition of the pleasant part she bore in the fortunes of my life.

The book was accepted, and still this piece of good luck did not make my head spin. I had lived among book-makers too much to expect the miracle. I went soberly back to my hack work, and on with my Sunday-school books.

One autumn day the customary package of gift copies of the new book made its way to Andover Hill; but I opened it without elation, the experience being so far from my first of its kind. The usual note of thanks was returned to the publishers, and quiet fell again. Unconscious of either hope or fear, I kept on about my business, and the new book was the last thing on earth with which I concerned myself.

One morning, not many weeks after its pub-

lication, I received a letter from Mr. James T. Fields. He, who was the quickest of men to do a kindness, and surest to give to young writers the encouraging word for which they had not hope enough to listen, had hurried himself to break to me the news.

"Your book is moving grandly," so he wrote. "It has already reached a sale of four thousand copies. We take pleasure in sending you" — He enclosed a check for six hundred dollars, the largest sum on which I had ever set my startled eyes. It would not, by my contract, have been due me for six months or more to come.

The little act was like him, and like the courteous and generous house on whose list I have worked for thirty years.

VI

AND STILL THE GATES AJAR

As was said in the last chapter, "The Gates Ajar" was written without hope or expectation of any especial success, and, when the happy storm broke, in truth, I was the most astonished girl in North America. From the day when Mr. Fields' thoughtful note reached the Andover post-office, that miracle such as we read of, often in fiction, and sometimes in literary history, touched the young writer's life; and it began over again, as a new form of organization.

As I look back upon them, the next few years seem to have been a series of amazing phantasmagoria. Indeed, at the time, they were scarcely more substantial. A phantom among phantoms, I was borne along. Incredulous of the facts and dubious of my own identity, I whirled through readjustments of scene, of society, of purposes, of hopes, and now, at last, of ambitions; and always of hard work and plenty of it. Really, I think the gospel of

JAMES T. FIELDS

PUBLIC Portland

work then, as always, and to all of us, was salvation from a good deal of nonsense incident to the situation.

I have been told that the American circulation of the book, which has remained below one hundred thousand, was outrun by that in Great Britain. Translations, of course, were manifold. The French, the German, the Dutch, the Italian have been conscientiously sent to the author; some others, I think, have not. More applications to republish my books have reached me from Germany than from any other country. For awhile, with the tenderness of a novice in such experience, I kept all these foreign curiosities on my book-shelves; but the throes of several New England "movings" have scattered their ashes.

Not long ago, I came across a tiny pamphlet, in which I used to feel more honest pride than in any edition of "The Gates Ajar" which it has ever been my fortune to handle. It is a sickly yellow thing, covered with a coarse design of some kind, in which the wings of a particularly sprawly angel predominate. The print is abhorrent, and the paper such as any respectable publisher would prepare to be condemned for in this world and in that to come. In fact, the entire book was thus given out by one of the most enterprising of English pirates as an

advertisement for a patent medicine. I have never traced the chemical history of the drug; but it has pleased my fancy to suppose it to be the one in which Mrs. Holt, the mother of Felix, dealt so largely; and whose sale Felix put forth his mighty conscience to suppress.

Of course, owing to the state of our copyright laws at that time, all this foreign publication was piratical; and most of it brought no visible consequence to the author, beyond that cold tribute to personal vanity on which our unlucky race is expected to feed. I should make one exception. The house of Sampson, Low and Company honorably offered me at a very early date a certain recognition of their editions. Other reputable English houses since, in the case of succeeding books, have passed contracts of a gentlemanly nature, with the disproportionately grateful author; who was, of course, entirely at their mercy. When an American writer compares the sturdy figures of the foreign circulation with the attenuated numerals of such visible returns as reach him, he is more puzzled in his mind than surfeited in his purse. But the relation of foreign publishers to "home talent" is an ancient and honorable conundrum, which it is not for this paper or its writer to solve.

Nevertheless, I found the patent medicine

Gates Ajar delicious, and used to compare it with Messrs. Fields and Osgood's édition de luxe with an undisguised delight which I found it difficult to induce the best of publishers to share.

Like most such matters, the first energy of the book has its funny and its serious side. A man coming from a far Western village, and visiting Boston for the first time, is said to have approached a bar-tender in an exclusive hotel thus confidentially : —

" Excuse me — but I am a stranger in this part of the country, and I want to ask a question. Everywhere I go, I see posted up like this — The Gates Ajar ! The Gates Ajar ! — I 'm sick to death of the sight of the durn thing ; I have n't darst to ask what it is. Do *tell* a fellar ! Is it a new kind of drink ? "

There was a Gates Ajar tippet, for sale in the country groceries ; I have fancied that it was a knit affair of as many colors as the jewels in the eternal portals, and extremely openwork. There was a Gates Ajar collar — paper, I fear — loading the city counters. Ghastly rumors have reached me of the existence of a Gates Ajar cigar ; I have never personally set my eyes upon these tangible forms of earthly fame. If the truth must be told, I have kept a cowardly distance from them. Music, of course, took

her turn at the book, and popular "pieces" warbled under its title. One of these, I think, is sung in Sunday-schools to this day. Then there was, and still exists, the Gates Ajar funeral piece. This used to seem to me the least serious of them all ; but, by degrees, when I saw the persistence of force in that elaborate symbol, and how many mourning people were so constituted as to find comfort in it, I came to have a tolerance for it which even grows into a certain tenderness. I may frankly admit that I have begun to love it, since I heard about the two ragged little newsboys who came to the eminent city florist, with all their savings clenched in their grimy fists, and thus made known their case : —

"Ye see Larks he was our pardner,— him an' us sold on the same beat,— an' he jes' got run over by a 'lectric, and it went over his back, so they tuk him to the horspittle, 'n Larks he up an' died there yestiddy. So us fellars were goin' to give Larks a stylish funeril, you bet. We liked Larks — an' it went over his back. Say, mister, there ain't nothin' mean 'bout *us*, come to buryin' of Larks ; 'n we 've voted to settle on one them Gates Ajar pieces — made o' flowers, doncherknow. So me 'n him an' the other fellars we 've saved up all our propurty, for we 're a-goin' ter give Larks a stylish

funeril — an' here it is, mister. I told the kids ef there was more 'n enough, you 's trow in a few greens, anyhow. Make up de order right away, mister, and give us our money's worf now, sure — for Larks."

The gamin proudly counted out upon the marble slab of that fashionable flower store the sum of seventy-five cents. The florist — blessings on him! — is said not to have undeceived the little fellows, but to have duly honored their "order;" and the biggest and most costly Gates Ajar piece to be had in the market went to the hospital and helped to bury Larks.

Of course, as is customary in the case of all authors who have written one popular book, requests for work at once rained in on the new study on Andover Hill; for it soon became evident that I must have a quiet place to write in. In the course of time I found it convenient to take for working hours a sunny room in the farmhouse of the seminary estate; a large, old-fashioned building next to my father's house. In still later years, I was allowed to build over for my own purposes the summer house under the big elm in my father's garden, once used by my mother for her own study, and well remembered by all persons interested in Andover scenery. This building had been for some

years used exclusively as a mud-bakery by the boys; it was piled with those clay turnovers and rolls and pies in whose manufacture the most select circles of Andover youth delighted.

But the bakery was metamorphosed into a decent, dear little room, about 9 by 11, and commanding the sun on the four sides of its quadrangle. In fact, it was a veritable sun-bath; and how dainty was the tip-drip of the icicles from the big elm-bough, upon the little roof! To this spot I used to travel down in all weathers; sometimes when it was so slippery on the hill behind the carriage house (for the garden paths were impassable in winter) that I have had to return to primitive methods of locomotion, and just sit down and coast half the way on the crust. Later still, when an accident and crutches put this delightful means of locomotion out of the question, the summer house (in a blizzard, I delighted in the name) was moved up beside my father's study. I have, in fact, always had an out-of-door study, apart from the house I lived in; and have come to look upon it as quite a necessity, so that we have carried on the custom in our Gloucester home. We heartily recommend it to all people who live by their brains and pens. The incessant trotting to and fro on little errands is a wholesome thing. Proof-sheets, empty ink-

stands, dried-up mucilage, yawning wood boxes, wet feet, missing scissors, unfilled kerosene lamps, untimely thirst, or unromantic lunches, the morning mail, and the dinner-bell, and the orders of one's pet dog, all are so many imperious summons to breathe the tingling air and stir the blood and muscle.

Be as uncomfortable or as cross about it as you choose — an out-of-door study is sure to prove your best friend. You become a species of literary tramp, and absorb something of the tramp's fine hygiene. It is impossible to be "cooped" at your desk, if you have to cross a garden or a lawn thirty times a day to get to it. And what reporter can reach that sweet seclusion across the distant housemaid's wily and experienced art? What autograph or lion hunter can ruin your best chapter by bombardment in mid-morning?

In the old farmhouse study I remember one of my earliest callers from the publishing world, that seems always to stand with clawing fingers demanding copy of the people least able to give it. He was an emissary from "The Youth's Companion," who threatened or cajoled me into a vow to supply him with a certain number of stories. My private suspicion is that I have just about at this present time completed my share in that ancient bargain, — so patient and

long-suffering has this pleasant paper been with me! I took particular delight in that especial visit, remembering the time when the Companion gave my first pious little sentences to print, and paid me with the paper for a year.

"The Gates Ajar" was attacked by the press. In fact, it was virulently bitten. The reviews of the book, some of them, reached the point of hydrophobia. Others were found to be in a milder pathological condition. Still others were gentle or even friendly enough. Religious papers waged war across that girl's notions of the life to come, as if she had been an evil spirit let loose upon accepted theology for the destruction of the world. The secular press was scarcely less disturbed about the matter; which it treated, however, with the more amused good-humor of a man of the world puzzled by a religious disagreement.

In the days of the Most Holy Inquisition there was an old phrase whose poignancy has always seemed to me to be but half appreciated. One did not say: He was racked; she was burned; they were flayed alive; or pulled apart with little pincers; or clasped in the arms of the red-hot Virgin. One was too well-bred for so bold a use of language. One politely and simply said, He was put to the question.

The young author of "The Gates Ajar" was only put to the question. Heresy was her crime, and atrocity her name. She had outraged the church. She had blasphemed its sanctities. She had taken live coals from the altar in her impious hand. The sacrilege was too serious to be dismissed with cold contempt. Opinion battled about that poor little tale, as if it had held the power to overthrow church and state and family.

It was an irreverent book — it was a devout book. It was a strong book — it was a weak book. It was a religious book — it was an immoral book. (I have forgotten just why; in fact, I think I never knew.) It was a good book — it was a bad book. It was calculated to comfort the comfortless — it was calculated to lead the impressionable astray. It was an accession to Christian literature — it was a disgrace to the religious antecedents of the author, and so on, and so forth.

At first, when some of these reviews fell in my way, I read them, knowing no better. But I very soon learned to let them alone. The kind notices, while they gave me a sort of courage which by temperament possibly I needed more than all young writers may, overwhelmed me, too, by a sense of my own inadequacy to be a teacher of the most solemn truths, on any

such scale as that towards which events seemed to be pointing. The unfair notices put me in a tremor of distress. The brutal ones affected me like a blow in the face from the fist of a ruffian.

None of them, that I can remember, ever helped me in any sense whatsoever to do better work. I quickly came to the conclusion that I was not adapted to reading the views of the press about my own writing. I made a vow to let them alone, and from that day to this I have kept it.

Unless in the case of something especially brought to my attention by friends, I do not read any reviews of my books. Of course, in a general way, one knows if some important pen has shown a comprehension of what one meant to do and tried to do, or has spattered venom upon one's poor achievement. Quite fairly, one cannot sit like the Queen in the kitchen, eating only bread and honey. And venom disagrees with me.

I sometimes think, if I may take advantage of this occasion to make the only reply in a working life of thirty years to any of the "slashers" with whose devotion I am told that I have been honored, — I sometimes think, good brother critics, that I have had my share of the attentions of poisoned weapons.

But, regarding my reviewers with the great good-humor of one who never reads what they say, I can afford to wish them lively luck and better game in some quivering writer, who takes the big pile of what it is the fashion to call criticisms from the publishers' table, and conscientiously reads them through. With *this* form of being "put to the question" I will have nothing to do. If it gives amusement to the reviewers, they are welcome to their sport. But they stab at the summer air, so far as any writer is concerned who has the pertinacity of purpose to let them alone.

Long after I had adopted the rule to read no notices of my work, I learned from George Eliot that the same had been her custom for many years; and felt reinforced in the management of my little affairs by this great example. Discussing the question once, with one of our foremost American writers, I was struck with something like holy envy in his expression. He had received rough handling from those "critics" who seem to consider authors as their natural foes, and who delight in aiming the hardest blows at the heaviest enemy. His fame is immeasurably superior to that of all his reviewers put together.

"Don't you really read them?" he asked wistfully. "I wish I could say as much. I 'm

afraid I should n't have the perseverance to keep that up right along."

In interesting contrast to all this discord from the outside, came the personal letters.

The book was hardly under way before the storm of them set in. It began like a New England snowstorm, with a few large, earnest flakes; then came the whirl of them, big and little, sleet and rain, fast and furious, regular and irregular, scurrying and tumbling over each other through the Andover mails.

The astonished girl bowed her head before the blast at first, with a kind of terrified humility. Then, by degrees she plucked up heart to give to each letter its due attention. It would not be very easy to make any one understand who had not been through a closely similar experience, just what it meant to live in the centre of such a whirlwind of human suffering. It used to seem to me sometimes, at the end of a week's reading of this large and painful mail, as if the whole world were one great outcry. What a little portion of it cried to the young writer of one little book of consolation! Yet, how the ear and heart ached under the piteous monotony! I made it a rule to answer every civil letter that I received; and, as few of them were otherwise, this correspondence was no light load.

I have called it monotonous, yet there was a curious variety in monotony such as no other book has brought to the author's attention. The same mail gave the pleasant word of some distinguished writer, who was so kind as to encourage a beginner in his own art, or so much kinder as gently and intelligently to point out her defects; and beneath this welcome note lay the sharp rebuke of some obscure parishioner, who found the Temple of Zion menaced to its foundation by my little story. Hunters of heresy and of autograph pursued their game side by side. Here some man of affairs writes to say (it seemed incredible, but it used to happen) that the book has given him his first intelligent respect for religious faith. There, a poor colored girl, inmate of a charitable institution, where she has figured as in deed and truth the black sheep, sends her pathetic tribute: —

"If heaven is like *that*, I want to go, and I mean to!"

To-day I am berated by the lady who is offended with the manner of my doctrine. I am called hard names in no soft language, and advised to pray Heaven for forgiveness for the harm I am doing by this ungodly book.

To-morrow I receive a widower's letter of twenty-six pages, rose-tinted, and perfumed. He relates his personal history. He encloses

the photograph of his dead wife, his living children, and himself. He adds the particulars of his income, which I am given to understand is large. He adds — but I turn to the next.

This correspondent, like scores upon scores of others, will be told instanter if I am a Spiritualist. On this vital point he demands my confession, or my life!

The next desires to be informed how much of the story is autobiography, and requires the regiment and company in which my brother served.

And now, I am haughtily taken to task by some unknown nature for allowing my heroine to be too much attached to her brother. I am told that this is impious; that only our Maker should receive such adoring affection as poor Mary offered to dead Roy.

Having recovered from this inconceivable slap in the face, I go bravely on. I open the covers of a pamphlet as green as Erin, entitled "Antidote to the Gates Ajar," consider myself as the poisoner of the innocent and reverent mind, and learn what I may from this lesson in toxicology.

There was always a certain share of abuse in these outpourings from strangers — it was relatively small, but it was enough to save my spirits, by the humor of it, or they would have

been crushed with the weight of the great majority.

I remember the editor of a large Western paper, who inclosed a clipping from his last review for my perusal. It treated, not of "The Gates Ajar" just then, but of a magazine story in "Harper's," "The Century," or wherever. The story was told in the first person fictitious, and began after this fashion: —

"I am an old maid of fifty-six, and have spent most of my life in boarding-houses." (The writer was, be it said, at that time scarcely twenty-two.) "Miss Phelps says of herself," observed this oracle, "that she is fifty-six years old; and we think she is old enough to know better than to write such a story as this!"

At a summer place, when I was in the early fervors of the art of making a home, a citizen was once introduced to me at his own request. I have forgotten his name, but remember having been told that he was "prominent." He was big, red, and loud, and he planted himself with the air of a man about to demolish his deadliest foe.

"So you are Miss Phelps. Well, I 've wanted to meet you. I read a piece you wrote in a magazine. It was about our town. It did not please Me."

I bowed with the interrogatory air which seemed to be expected of me. Being just then very much in love with that lovable place, I was puzzled with this accusation; and quite unable to recall, out of the warm flattery which I had heaped upon the town in cool print, any visible cause of offense.

"You said," pursued my accuser angrily, "that we had odors here. You said our town smelled of fish. Now, you know, *we* get so used to these smells, *we like 'em!* It gave great offense to the community, Madam. And I really thought at one time, — feelin' ran so high, — I thought it would kill the sale of your book!"

From that day to this, I do not believe the idea has visited the brain of this estimable person that a book could circulate in any other spot upon the map than within his native town. This delicious bit of provincialism served to make life worth living for many a long day.

There was fun enough in this sort of thing to "keep one up," so that one could return bravely to the chief end of existence. For this seemed for many years to be nothing less and little else than the exercise of those faculties called forth by the wails of the bereaved. From every corner of the civilized globe and in many of its languages they came to me — entreaties, out-

pourings, cries of agony, mutterings of despair, breathings of the gentle hope by which despair may be superseded; appeals for help which only the Almighty could have given; demands for light which only Eternity can supply.

A man's grief, when he chooses to confide it to a woman, is not an easy matter to deal with; its dignity and its pathos are never to be forgotten: how to meet it, Heaven only teaches; and how far Heaven taught that awed and humble girl I shall never know. But the women — oh, the poor women! I felt less afraid to answer them. Their misery seemed to cry in my arms like a child who must be comforted. I wrote to them — I wrote without wisdom or caution or skill, only with the power of being sorry for them, and the wish to say so; and, if I said the right thing or the wrong one, whether I comforted or wearied, strengthened or weakened — that, too, I shall not know.

Sometimes, in recent years, a letter comes or a voice speaks: "Do you remember — so many years ago — when I was in great trouble? You wrote to me." And I am half ashamed that I had forgotten. But I bless her because *she* remembers.

But when I think of the hundreds — it came into the thousands — of such letters received,

and how large a proportion of them were answered, my heart sinks. How is it possible that one should not have done more harm than good by that unguided sympathy? If I could not leave the open question to the Wisdom that protects and overrules well-meaning ignorance, I should be afraid to think of it. For many years I was snowed under by those mourners' letters. In truth, they have not ceased entirely yet, though, of course, their visits are now irregular; for the book will soon be thirty years of age.

I am so often asked if I still believe the views of another life set forth in "The Gates Ajar," that I am glad to use this opportunity to answer the question; though indeed I have been led to do so to a certain extent in another place, and may perhaps be pardoned for repeating the words in which the question first and most naturally answered itself.

"Those appeals of the mourning, black of edge and blurred with tears, were a mass high beneath the hand and heavy to the heart. These letters had the terrible and unanswerable power of all great, natural voices; and 'the chiefest of these' are love and grief. Year upon year the recipient has sat dumb before these signs of human misery and hope. They have rolled upon the shore of life, a billow of

solemn inspiration. I have called them the human argument for faith in the future life, and see no reason for amending the term."

But why dwell on the little book which was only the trembling organ-pipe through which the music thrilled? Its faults have long since ceased to trouble, and its friends to elate me. Sometimes one seems to one's self to be the least or last agency in the universe responsible for such a work. What was the book? Only an outcry of nature; and nature answered it. That was all. And nature is of God, and is mighty before Him.

Do I believe in the "middle march" of life, as the girl did, in the morning, before the battle of the day? For nature's sake, which is for God's sake, I cannot hesitate. Useless suffering is the worst of all kinds of waste. Unless He created this world from sheer extravagance in the infliction of purposeless pain, there must be another life to justify, to heal, to comfort, to offer happiness, to develop holiness. If there be another world, and such a one, it will be no theologic drama, but a sensible, wholesome scene.

The largest and the strongest elements of this experimental life will survive its weakest and smallest. Love is "the greatest thing in the world," and love will claim its own at

last. The affection which is true enough to live forever, need have no fear that the life to come will thwart it. The grief that goes to the grave unhealed, may put its trust in unimagined joy to be. The patient, the uncomplaining, the unselfish mourner, biding his time and bearing his lot, giving more comfort than he gets, and with beautiful willfulness believing in the intended kindness of an apparently harsh force which he cannot understand — may come to perceive even here, that Infinite Power and Mercy are one; and, I solemnly believe, is sure to do so, in the life beyond, where "God keeps a niche in heaven to hold our idols."

VII

MRS. STOWE: JAMES T. FIELDS

One preëminent figure moving gently for a few years upon the Andover stage, I had almost omitted from the reminiscences of the Hill, — I suppose because in truth she never seemed to me to be of Andover, or its life akin to hers. I refer to the greatest of American women, Harriet Beecher Stowe.

To the stranger visiting Andover for a day, there will long be pointed out, as one of the "sights" of the Hill, the house occupied by Mrs. Stowe during the time of her husband's professorship in the Seminary. After she disappeared from among us, that home of genius met a varied fate. I wonder, do houses feel their ascents and declines of fortune as dogs do, or horses? One sometimes fancies that they may, if only through the movement of that odic force whose mysterious existence science cannot deny, and speculation would not. Next to a man's book or his child, what can be so invested with himself as the house he lives in? Saturated with humanity as they are, who

knows how far sentience may develop under observant roofs and in conscious rooms long possessed by human action and endurance?

Mrs. Stowe's house, still retaining the popular name of Uncle Tom's Cabin, became for a while a club devoted to the honorable ends of boarding theologues. At the present time the Trustees' hotel is in the building, which has suffered many dreary practical changes. The house is of stone, and in the day of its distinguished occupant was a charming place. As a house, it is very difficult; but Mrs. Stowe has always had the home-touch in a beautiful degree.

In fact, my chief impression of those years when we had the rich opportunity of her vicinity consists in occasional glimpses of lovely interiors, over which presided a sweet and quiet presence, as unlike the eidolon which Andover Seminary seemed to have created for itself of this great and gracious lady, as a spirit is unlike an old-time agitator. To tell the truth, — which perhaps is not necessary — I dimly suspected then, and I have been sure of it since, that the privilege of neighborhood was but scantily appreciated in Andover in the case of this eminent woman. Why, I do not know. She gave no offense, that I can recall, to the peculiar preferences of the place; the fact that she was

MRS. STOWE'S HOUSE, ANDOVER

rumored to have leanings towards the Episcopal Church did not prevent her from dutifully occupying with her family her husband's pew in the old chapel; it was far to the front, and her ecclesiastical delinquencies would have been only too visible, had they existed. A tradition that she visited the theatre in Boston when she felt like it, sometimes passed solemnly from lip to lip; but this is the most serious criticism upon her which I can remember.

I have since found suspicion blossoming into a belief that the vagueness of arithmetic which led to an insufficient estimate of Mrs. Stowe's value, or at least to a certain bluntness in our sense of the honor which she did to Andover by living among us, sprung from the fact that she was a woman.

Andover was a heavily masculine place. She was used to eminent men, and to men who thought they were, or meant to be, or were thought to be by the ladies of their families, and the pillars of their denomination. At the subject of eminent women the Hill had not arrived. I have sometimes wondered what would have been the fate even of my mother, had she lived to work her power to its bloom. And Mrs. Stowe's fame was clearly a fact so apart from the traditions and from the ideals, that Andover was puzzled by it. The best of

her good men were too feudal in their views of women in those days, to understand a life like Mrs. Stowe's. It should be remembered that we have moved on since then, so fast and so far, that it is almost as hard now for us to understand the perplexity with which intelligent, even instructed men, used to consider the phenomenon of a superior woman, as it was then for such men to understand such a woman at all. Let us offer to them the width of sympathy and fineness of perception which they did not always know how to offer to the woman.

My personal remembrances of Mrs. Stowe are those of a young girl whom she entertained at intervals, always delightfully, in the long parlor running the width of the stone house, whose deep embrasured window-seats seemed to me only less wonderful than the soft and brightly-colored, rather worldly-looking pillows with which these attractive nooks were generously filled. There were flowers always, and a bower of ivy made summer of the eternal Andover winters in the stone house ; and there were merry girls and boys, — Mrs. Stowe was the most unselfish and loving of mothers, — and there were always dogs ; big and little, curly and straight ; but in some form, dog-life with its gracious reaction on the gentleness and kindness of family life abounded in her house.

It was an open, hospitable house, human and hearty and happy, and I have always remembered it affectionately.

An amusing instance of the spirit of the stone house comes back to me from some far-away day, when I found myself schoolmate to Mrs. Stowe's youngest daughter. This little descendant of genius and of philanthropy was bidden to write a composition — an order which she resolutely refused for some time to obey. But the power above her persisted, and one day, the child brought in a slip of paper a few inches long, on which were inscribed these words only: "Slavery is the greatest curse of human nature."

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" was not written in the stone house at Andover. But there the awful inscription of a great grief was cut into the quivering flesh and blood of a mother's heart. The sudden and violent death of a favorite son — which made of "The Minister's Wooing" an immortal outcry to mothers bereaved — occurred, if I am not wrong, while Mrs. Stowe was among us. I never pass the house without thinking what those stone walls have known and kept of that chrism of personal anguish through which a great soul passed in learning how to offer consolation to the suffering of the world.

One of the prettiest pictures which I have of Mrs. Stowe is framed in the everglades of Florida. Her home at Magnolia offered a guest-room in which one could pass a night of such quiet as Paradise might envy. The house, I remember, was built about a great live-oak, and the trunk of the tree grew into the room; the walls being cleverly adjusted to the contour of the bark. Through the open windows the leaves drifted silently, falling about the room, the floor, the bed, as they pleased. One slept like a hamadryad, and waked like a bird in a bough.

Into this nest of green and peace, I had (I remember it with shame and contrition) the hardness of heart and bluntness of courtesy to intrude a pile of proof-sheets. It was my first book of verses. The volume was in press. I was in misery of doubt about the venture. In the State of Florida my hostess was the only accessible person whose judgment could help me; and fate had thrown me on her sweet charity with my galleys. The publishers at the North, a thousand miles away, were hurrying me. There was not a day to lose, if I had made a grave blunder; and I mercilessly read the verses to her, beseeching her advice and criticism.

It would be hard to forget the sweetness, the

patience, and the frankness with which she gave herself to my cruel request. I remember how she curled herself up on the bed beside me, like a girl, with her feet crossed under her, and listened gently. The live-oak leaves fell softly about us, and the St. John's River showed in glimpses, calm, coffee-colored, and indifferent, between the boughs. The utter silence of a Florida wilderness compassed us. My own voice sounded intrusive and foreign to me as I read. Nothing could exceed her kindness or her wisdom as a critic. I had made one rather serious mistake in one of the poems, — a fault in taste which I had overlooked. She called my attention to it so explicitly, yet so delicately, that I could have thanked her with tears. "A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath" than she was to me that day.

The last time that I saw Mrs. Stowe was on the occasion of her seventieth birthday; when, at the country seat of Governor and Mrs. Claflin, in Newtonville, her publishers, Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin and Company, tendered her a reception, — I think she called it a birthday party.

It fell to me to go out to the breakfast with Doctor Holmes, who always loved and appreciated Mrs. Stowe, and who seemed to enjoy himself like a happy boy all day. His tribute,

written for the day, was one of the best of his famous occasional poems; and he did me the honor to read my own unimportant verses for me — a thing which I found it impossible to do for myself — with such grace and fervor as almost made me feel as if I had written something of Doctor Holmes's. It was a unique sensation; and, though one of the most humbling of life, yet one of the most agreeable.

Mrs. Stowe's appearance that day — one of her last, I think, in public — was a memorable one. Her dignity, her repose, a certain dreaminess and aloofness of manner characteristic of her, blended gently with her look of peace and unmistakable happiness. Crowded with honors as her life had been, I have fancied that this, among her latest, in her quiet years, and so full of the tenderness of personal friendship, had especial meanings to her, and gave her deep pleasure. Among our literary people no one of consequence omitted to do honor to the foremost woman of America: there were possibly one or two exceptions, of the school which does not call "Uncle Tom's Cabin" literature unless it is obliged to; but they were scarcely missed.

The most beautiful story which I ever heard about Mrs. Stowe I have asked no permission to share with the readers of these papers, and

yet I feel sure that no one who loves and honors her could refuse it ; for I believe that if the whole of it were told, it might live to enhance the nobility of her name and fame as long as Uncle Tom himself. It was told me, as such things go, from lip to lip of personal friends who take pride in cherishing the sweetest thoughts and facts about those whom they love and revere.

During the latter part of her life Mrs. Stowe has been one of those devout Christian believers whose consecration takes high forms. She has placed faith in prayer, and given herself to the kind of dedication which exercises and cultivates it. There came a time in her history when one who was very dear to her seemed about to sink away from the faith in which she trusted, and to which life and sorrow had taught her to cling as only those who have suffered, and doubted, and accepted, can.

This prospect was a crushing grief to her, and she set herself resolutely to avert the calamity if, and while, she could. Letter after letter — some of them thirty pages long — found its way from her pen to the foreign town in which German rationalism was doing its worst for the soul she loved. She set the full force of her intellect intelligently to work upon this conflict. She read, she reasoned, she wrote,

she argued, she pleaded. Months passed in a struggle whose usefulness seemed a pitiable hope, to be frustrated in the effort.

Then she laid aside her strong pen, and turned to her great faith. As the season of the sacred holiday approached, she shut herself into her room, secluding herself from all but God, and prayed, as only such a believer — as only such a woman — may. As she had set the full force of her intellect, so now she set the full power of her faith to work upon her soul's desire. One may not dwell in words upon that sacred battle. But the beautiful part of the story, as I have been told it, is, that a few weeks after this a letter reached her, saying only: "At Christmas time a light came to me. I see things differently now. I see my way to accept the faith of my fathers; — and the belief in Christianity which is everything to you has become reasonable and possible to me at last."

Andover is but twenty miles from Boston, and it was an easy slide from the Hill to town life. For many years my winters were practically spent among Boston friends. Nothing, however, can ever make a real country girl into a cockney; and my tendency towards town has never been a law of gravitation. I cannot re-

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HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

member the time when I was not happy to get back to country horizons; to the ice-storm on the heavily-hanging, glittering elms; to the blue snow that succeeds the rose of a clear, cold sunset; to the etching of the fine twigs against a winter sky at noon; to the white powder on the spruce boughs, and the deep color of the pines; to the noble brow of Wachusett solemnly greeting me from its distant watch; to the peace and the purity of unspotted drifts and snow-fields, and the stillness of long nights broken only by the starting and cracking of ice in the solid crust about the silent house; or even to the roar of the northwest gale, straight from the mountains, unobstructed and almighty, thundering against the quivering windows like the soul of "a strong, wicked man" (as Blake pictured him) set adrift in space: and always to the huge, open fires such as no city hearth ever knows, generously ornamenting the furnace-heated house with the glow and the gladness that belong only to the heart of unstinted flame. I came home early and often (like the busy voter), and the soul of the true suburban who cannot long look upon town as a place to "stay," grew in me. I can remember but once when the deprivations of the country in midwinter gave me a kind of distaste amounting almost to horror, and like

most of our strong or unnatural aversions, that was pathological. I was on crutches; and Andover Hill was in ice. The world wore a mail of frozen fire that lasted for many weeks. The snow-plough had abandoned the battle with the sidewalks, which rolled underfoot with broken icicles writhing upon solid ice.

The dignified elms whose attitudes were not less stately in January than in June, bent like mutilated gods beneath their cruel loads. Their broken boughs and mangled branches lay frozen into the crust all over the Hill — a pitiable ruin. To this day, some of the finest trees in Andover have not recovered from the devastation of that winter. It was weeks before the mercy of the thaw befell them and us. Sometimes, then, the "shut in," glancing at the world of ice which she dared not watch, thought with a certain Arctic desolation of laughing streets, of the sound of shovel and ice-pick on traversable pavements, of bright interiors, and welcoming eyes, and mettlesome conversation, and the little physical and large mental luxuries of the town, where winter is but a pleasant stage-scene in a warm theatre, shifting in its turn among the other diversions of life.

Among the charming homes towards which my good fortune led me in those years, were a few especially known in Boston for their grace-

ful power in attracting distinguished guests. Of the friends who presided over these centres of delightful entertainment, all but one[1] are yet living: it is therefore scarcely permitted me — excepting in his case — to put my affectionate debt in words.

So much has been written of Mr. Fields, and his interesting personality is still so well remembered, that perhaps I have little to add that is new to the appreciation in which he is yet held. He was a man not always understood; sometimes a little envied; but widely beloved. Perhaps no man in our country and in our times has commanded more personal friendships with valuable natures. His position at the head of one of the leading publishing houses of the land brought him, of course, into frequent relation with selected people. This great house, which has always aimed to publish literature, owes much of its position and power to his personality. It seems to me — I knew him well — fully as remarkable a personality now, at this distance of time, as I thought it when, as a frightened young author, I first accepted Mrs. Fields's hospitality, and the friendship of both.

As a publisher, his courtesy amounted to

[1] This was written before the recent death of Mrs. Claflin, — a brilliant and gracious hostess, a dear and cherished friend.

beneficence. It used often to be said of him, that Mr. Fields could refuse a manuscript and send a rejected author away happier than any other man could by accepting it. He had one of the kindest hearts I ever knew; and his good-will to men was a fountain, springing up to continual life. From the first day when the letter about "The Gates Ajar" came to Andover, — that pretty, personal letter, not left to any secretary to write for him, — telling a hopeless girl that "the book was moving grandly," I received nothing but good measure from a publisher and a friend, whose memory will always stand apart to me as that of one of the valuable influences of my life. I am but one of many who would say as much, and more, than this. After his death, the tributes which poured in would have astonished those who only knew Mr. Fields as a man of the world, a gay converser, a delightful host, a connoisseur in letters, and a distinguished publisher.

"He rendered me a great service." "In the darkest hour of my life, he came, giving light and hope." "He was to me, as to so many others, the helpful friend when I most needed help. Such men are the heralds of the Millennium." "His mind," said Doctor Holmes, "was as hospitable as his roof; which accepted famous writers and quiet friends alike, as if it had been their

own." Whittier, who had known Mr. Fields for forty years, wrote to me of him in these words. "He loved much, pitied much, and never hated. He was Christ-like in sympathy and kindness, and in doing good. My turn will soon come. God grant I may meet it with half his cheerfulness and patience."

It was written of him long ago: "Society will pass on 'Mr. Fields's stories' for years to come; but when these are forgotten, silent men and women will cherish their sacred share of Mr. Fields's kindness."

One of his favorite dinner-table stories was of the man who was "a firm friend to every one who did not need a friend." His laughing eye lay in wait to see if one would tumble into his little trap, and its merry respect for one's self-protecting intellect, if one perceived the net, was as refreshing as after-dinner coffee.

One of the prettiest stories I ever heard about Mr. Fields, I think, may have been already told in his memoirs; but I am sure I shall not be forbidden to recall it here.

On one of his lecture tours at the West, in a small town, an inexperienced young person had engaged him without suitable advertisements or arrangements. It was a bitter night, and the audience was so scanty that the poor young man who, presumably, had not a dollar where-

with to meet his liabilities, was overcome with anguish. Mr. Fields, used to the best audiences in America, exhibited no discomfort, but quietly took the young manager apart, released him from all pecuniary obligation to the lecturer, and inquired the extent of his indebtedness for all other expenses. These were quietly met out of the lecturer's own pocket; and that young man went away adoring.

I remember one instance which, undoubtedly, was but one of many like it, never brought to the knowledge of his friends, where Mr. Fields's observant eye discovered a well-known author under one of the lapses of fortune so common in our struggling calling, — sick, neglected, and poor past the edge of want. The publisher hunted up the poor fellow, made a call of courtesy, talked a little in his cheerful way, and left. But that afternoon came to the sufferer the proceeds of his visitor's last lecture. "I have just cashed the check," wrote the happy-natured Samaritan, "and am convinced the bills are counterfeit. I have no kind of use for them. Do get them off my hands."

Mr. Fields was a man of marked chivalry of nature, and, at a time when it was not fashionable to help the movements for the elevation of women, his sympathy was distinct, fearless, and faithful. In a few instances we knew and he

knew that this fact deprived him of the possession of certain public honors which would otherwise have been offered him.

He advocated the political advancement of our sex, coeducation, and kindred movements, without any of that apologetic murmur so common among the half-hearted or the timid. His fastidious and cultivated literary taste was sensitive to the position of women in letters. He was incapable of that literary snobbishness which undervalues a woman's work because it is a woman's. A certain publishing enterprise which threatened to treat of eminent men came to his notice. He quickly said: "The time has gone by for that! Men and women! Men and *women!*"

"When the war is over," he said to Mrs. Livermore, when she appealed to him for some help (which he generously gave) in behalf of the Sanitary Commission, "you must give us a book of your experience, and show us the heavenly side of the War."

I remember one day after his mortal illness was upon him, that I chanced to be passing through the hall, as he was preparing to go out. He was too weak to put on his own overcoat, and he was obliged to ask a servant to do it for him. I was struck with the manner in which he did this: "Lisa" — he said gently, "I am

afraid I must trouble you." Any thoughtful gentleman might have *said* as much ; but how many would have given a servant an order in such a tone as his ? It is not possible to reproduce the delicacy and chivalry of it ; as if, because she was a woman, he would have spared her that trifling, personal service.

I thought of this when I heard recently the testimony of a refined young woman who, to aid herself in her education, had taken service in a New York family, determined to try the experiment of "lady help," of which the employer talks so much, and concerning which the employee is often so mysteriously silent. "I left the situation," she said. "The gentlemen of the family came in and handed me their dripping umbrellas on a wet day without a glance or a word — not as if I were a human being — just as if I had been an umbrella stand. I could not bear it."

Bryant said of Mr. Fields that no one could impress upon the people of this country so well as he the value and importance of the study of English literature. This I believe to have been no exaggerated view of the usefulness and quality of his lectures and writings. Personal acquaintance with him was an intellectual privilege, of which it is impossible to speak otherwise than gratefully.

My individual debt to Mr. Fields, in respect to my own work, is one which I cannot and would not omit to acknowledge. He often helped me about my titles, and one of the best ever given to any book of mine — "Men, Women, and Ghosts" — was of his creation. In his fine literary judgment I had great confidence, and would have accepted almost any criticism from him trustfully. But perhaps his quick intuition perceived that I should be too easily disheartened, for I remember almost exclusively the pleasant, the hopeful, the appreciative words with which he stimulated my courage and my work.

I recall an occasion when I had ventured into an entirely new avenue of effort, and was in that chaos succeeding work and preceding publication, which one may call the author's abyss, — so hopeless was I of the success of my undertaking. How did he know? for I had not said this to any person; but before the article came out, while it was yet in press, swiftly came the little note: "A better paper never appeared in this or any other magazine!" I held up my head and breathed again, until that dreaded and dreadful number of the "Atlantic" had gone by.

I was once introduced by a clever man to a gentleman in these words, — "Let me present

to you one of your natural foes: he is a publisher." Such kindness and thoughtfulness as that of Mr. Fields endeared the publisher to his authors, and made of them his natural friends.

His sense of delicacy in literary, as in all other matters, was of a high and fine quality. I remember once dining at his table with a public singer who, though a woman of irreproachable character and position, had acquired a little something slipshod in her way of talking; of the sort that is common among people of the stage. She used a certain expression, — perfectly simple and suitable to her view, — but one which we were not accustomed to hear at that table. The face of the host, a moment before shining with geniality and fun, froze instantly. The perfect silence in which that unfortunate word was received, was the only rebuke possible under the circumstances; but it was enough. The guest understood, I think; though she looked as much astonished as embarrassed.

Before "The Story of Avis" went to press, I read the manuscript to Mr. and Mrs. Fields; it was the only time, I believe, that I imposed such a burden on these good friends. When I came to the chapter where Ostrander sits late at the piano with Barbara, while his sick wife

sleeps upstairs, Mr. Fields interrupted me with an expression of recoil. "Oh, no!" he cried; "no, no! Not *that!* Don't introduce anything of that kind! Keep the story above *that!*" He was appeased when I read on, and he learned that the worst of the situation consisted in the fact that Ostrander did take Barbara's hand. But I think his heart went back grudgingly to the tale which he had feared was about to descend into a moral quagmire; and that it took him some time to recover his trust in it. In the end, I hope he did.

His was a rich life, and his a rare home. There has been no other in America quite like it. Those of us who received its hospitality recall its inspiration among the treasures of our lives. We think of the peaceful library into which the sunset over the Charles looked delicately, while the "best things" of thought were given and taken by the finest and strongest minds of the day in a kind of electric interplay, which makes by contrast a pale affair of the word conversation as we are apt to use it. We recall the quiet guest-chamber, apart from the noise of the street, and lifted far above the river; that room opulent and subtle with the astral shapes of past occupants, — Longfellow, Whittier, Dickens, Thackeray, Mrs. Stowe, Kingsley, and the rest of their high order, —

and always resounding softly to the fine ear with the departed tread of Hawthorne, who used to pace the floor on sleepless nights. We remember the separation from paltriness, and from superficial adjustments, which that scholarly and gentle atmosphere commanded. We remember the master of their abode of thought and graciousness, as "Dead, he lay among his books;" and wish that we had it in our power to portray him as he was.

VIII

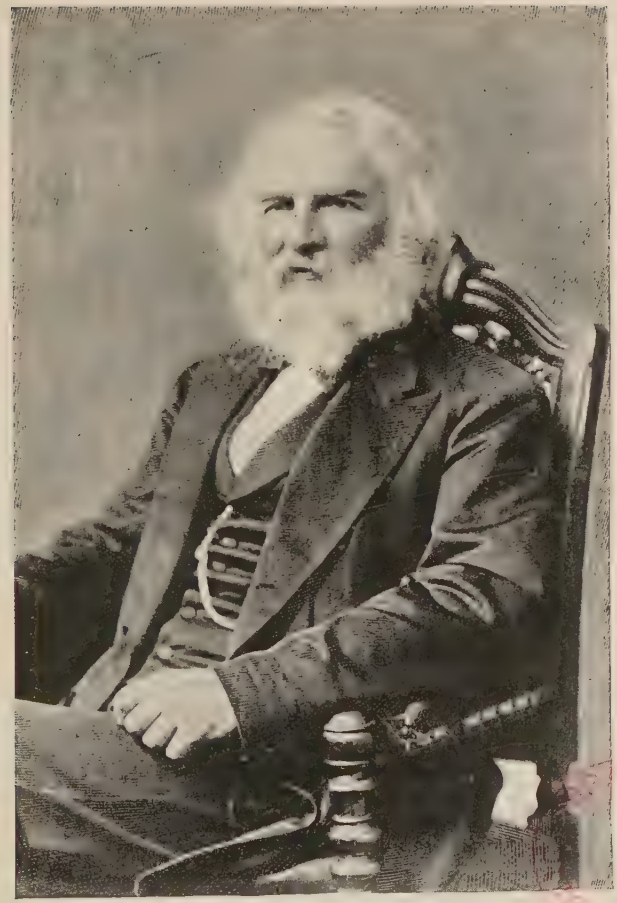
LONGFELLOW : WHITTIER : HOLMES

Of our great pentarchy of poets, one — Lowell — I never met ; and of another — Emerson — my personal knowledge, as I have said, was but of the slightest. With the remaining three I had differing degrees of friendship ; and to speak of them is still a privilege full of affectionate sadness.

Longfellow I knew less well than the others ; but my few memories of him are as mellow and fair as yesterday's October day melting on the great horizon beyond my study windows. I think the first time that I saw him was at Mr. Fields's ; my impressions are that he was ill that day, and a little under the reflection of physical suffering ; and that I thought at the time that this fact accounted for the peculiar gentleness of his personality. Afterwards, when I saw him in happier conditions, I learned that this was no pathological incident, but that his atmosphere was like that of the mystic lands "where it is always afternoon." He remains in my thought as one of the gentlest men

whom I ever knew. There was a certain innate serenity, quite apart from the quality of his manner; a manner which had the repose of something that it seems almost underbred to call the finest breeding, because it went beyond and below and above that. I heard Emerson once say of some one — I cannot recall of whom — that he was "expressed to gold-leaf." Mr. Longfellow could not be defined in this phrase, only because he was too genuine to appropriate it. His endowment of personal culture was so generous as to give one in contact with it the keenest delight. He seemed to me a man cultivated almost to the capacity of his nature. It was inconceivable that he could, under any stress, slip into rudeness of view, or do the incomplete thing. He was finished well-nigh to elaboration. Yet, as I say, he stopped this side of gold-leaf. For he had retained his sincerity almost to the point of naïveté; he had preserved the spontaneity which a lesser man under his attrition with the world would have lost.

I was once in a box at the theatre in a company of friends of whom he was one. The play was a simple affair — Hazel Kirke: there was nothing great, historic, or perhaps in a strict sense artistic about it; it was the old story of a Scotch marriage, separated lovers, a



HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

wronged girl, and a heartbroken father. There was a scene where Hazel followed her blind father about the room upon her knees, pressing the hem of his long coat to her lips; he meanwhile being ignorant of her presence, and remaining so till she had disappeared. I turned, indiscreetly enough, and looked at the poet where he sat, a little in the shadow of our box. I was astonished to see the tears — not gathering, but falling down his face. He made no effort to conceal or to check them: indeed, I think he was unconscious of them. He noticed none of us; but gave his heart up to the great human passion of the little play with a simplicity and genuineness touching to see.

I remember, at another time, lunching at his house on an occasion when the guest of honor was a great actress of the higher caste. She was not an American; and, thinking to interest her, at our request, Mr. Longfellow read aloud a poem of his, which treated of her own country, and of its struggles for a freedom at that time unattained. When he had finished the reading, he turned, and found her in tears. I know it occurred to me at the time that an actress of her resources might have spared him that; but probably she, too, was genuine when she could be. At all events, the lady wept. I shall never forget the tone and manner with which

he turned towards her. "Oh!" he cried, "I meant to give you happiness! — And I have given you pain!" His accent on the word "pain" was like the smart of a wound. Out of strength came sweetness, and his unspoiled genius had preserved the simple reality of a kind heart.

The finest tribute which I ever heard offered to Longfellow was one which may not have found its way into print; for it did not come from the great of the earth, claiming their own and revering him. He had his due of that, in life and in death. It would have been an honor to statesmen or to kings to be guests at the poet's table. But what sweeter thing was ever said of him than this? "If there is any person in Cambridge, or in Boston, whom he knows to be in greater need than any other, of social kindness; any one obscure, overlooked, unknown, and friendless, — *that* is the person you are sure to find invited to Mr. Longfellow's house."

Mr. Longfellow was very kind to me, in certain opinions which he expressed about some of my writings not agreeable to all my readers. At the time "The Story of Avis" came out, I received from him a few letters which were the greatest possible comfort to me; for, though I had not expected that book

to have a wide circle of friends, yet I did hope in some measure to atone by their quality for their quantity.

Even in autobiography I could not bring myself to reprint those letters so far as they dealt with my book; but the fact that he understood my favorite heroine where smaller men might not, or did not, has been one of the pleasantest bits of subconsciousness in the life of a writer who has had her share of misapprehension and critical abuse. I have, in fact, never met any other man who showed, from the author's point of view, such a marvelous intuition in the comprehension of an unusual woman; or of what the author of "Avis" tried to do, in relating her history. "The Story of Avis" was a woman's book, hoping for small hospitality at the hands of men.

Mr. Longfellow came but once to my home on Gloucester Harbor; but on that occasion I had the especial pleasure of pointing out to him the reef of "Norman's Woe;" which, though he had wrecked the schooner Hesperus, and broken half our hearts upon it, he had singularly enough never seen (I think he said) before.

I remember one dull, cold day — it was a Sunday — when, being entertained at the home of Governor and Mrs. Claflin, I found Mr.

Whittier also a guest. The suggestion arose that we should drive out to see Mr. Longfellow. This we did; — Mr. Whittier, Mrs. ——, and myself. Mr. Whittier was at his brightest on that drive to Cambridge; full of good stories, and good appreciation of them; more than usually cheerful, and inclined to talk happily. We drove up to Longfellow's door; there seemed an unusual silence about the calm and gentle place. Mr. Whittier went on alone and rang the bell. It was our purpose to remain in the carriage, I think, leaving the two poets to themselves undisturbed by our smaller personalities. We were, therefore, astonished to see Mr. Whittier returning in a moment. He ran down the steps and sprang in with excitement, hitting his tall hat, I remember, on the carriage door, and entirely unconscious that he had done so. He was more agitated than I had ever seen him.

"Longfellow is sick!" he cried, "very sick! They are very anxious." He leaned back on the carriage cushions, much perturbed. "It is a long time since I have seen him!" he said drearily. His agitation remained. The drive back to Boston was a gloomy one. His vivacity was quite extinguished. He scarcely spoke to either of us all the way; but stared solemnly out of the window with eyes that

seemed to see nothing nearer than the world to which his great friend was called. Every one who knew him can understand what his wonderful eyes must have been to look upon at such a time. We rode home, and he went at once to his room; where his hostess always decreed that he should be sheltered from all possible intrusion. Longfellow died, if I am correct about it, two days after. To this day, I seem to see him passing on, through the seer's look in Whittier's eyes.

"It was a disappointment," he wrote, "not to be able to see Longfellow then, and much more after his death; but I am glad I went on that last Sabbath, and that thee was with me. . . . Ah, well! as Wordsworth asked, after commemorating the friends who had left him: 'Who next shall fall and disappear?' I await the answer with awe and solemnity, and yet with unshaken trust in the mercy of the All Merciful."

Whittier was a shy and scanty visitor; and a new interior was an insurmountable trouble to him in his later years. I think he cultivated in himself a kind of chronic expectation of sometime fulfilling his conditional promise to come and see me; but in point of fact he never did. I saw him at the houses of one or two old friends in town, where he had acquired

a habit of flitting in and out ; or else at his own home. And he wrote, when he could. Sometimes long silence fell between the letters. Sometimes they succeeded each other quickly. This was as it happened. To me, my broken acquaintance with him was one of the inspirations of my life.

He was full of frolic, in a gentle way ; no one of the world's people ever had a keener sense of humor. From every interview with him one carried away a good story, or a sense of having had a good time : he never darkened the day, or shadowed the heart. He inspirited. He invigorated. "I like," he wrote to a friend, "the wise, Chinese proverb : 'You cannot prevent the birds of sadness from flying over your head, but you may prevent them from stopping to build their nests in your hair!'"

With what boyish delight he absorbed a fresh anecdote, if it had the right ring to it, and how tenderly he encouraged the best of the old ones! Most of the more amusing incidents of his personal experience have been long ago published by the friends with whom he used to share them. Perhaps the story about Lucy Larcom is one of them : but I venture to repeat it, as one which has vividly stayed by me.

A caller, one of "the innumerable throng

that moves" to the doors of the distinguished, there to indulge the weak curiosity of an ignorance too pitiable to be angry with, made himself troublesome one day in the poet's home at Amesbury.

"I have come, Sir," he said pompously, "to take you by the hand. I have long wished to know the author of 'Hannah binding Shoes!'"

Now Lucy Larcom happened to be sitting, in her serene fashion, silently by the window at that time; and Mr. Whittier turned towards her with the courtly bow into which the Quaker poet's simple manner could bend so regally, when he chose.

"I am happy," replied Mr. Whittier, waving his hand towards the lady in the window, "to have the opportunity to present thee to the author of that admirable poem — Lucy Larcom!"

It was one of Mr. Whittier's laughable reminiscences of anti-slavery days, when he was a free soil candidate for Congress, that he was charged by political enemies with "ill-treating his wife"!

For so gentle a man Mr. Whittier was a very keen lance in argument. A man who prided himself on being a disbeliever in Christianity once obtruded his views on Mr. Whit-

tier in a blatant manner; enforcing the assertion that there was no truth in the doctrine of immortality, because he knew that he had, himself, no soul. "Friend," replied the poet, with rippling eyes, "I quite agree with thee. I am ready to admit that thee has no soul. But speak for thyself, friend, speak for thyself!"

As I knew Mr. Whittier in his later years, my impressions of his life are those of its most lonely period. With heartache for which there are no words, I used to come away sometimes, from glimpses of its deep, inward desolation. Friends in full measure he had; and everything possible was done in his descending years, by those who had the nearest right to minister to him, to give him comfort. But his solitude went too deep for the surface relations of life to fathom. Illness, and deafness, and the imperfect use of his eyes increased it heavily. He could read but very little, and could write less.

His home at Danvers was a pleasant one, full of creature comforts, and womanly kindliness; but the New England winter pressed heavily about it.

"How do you spend the days?" I asked once, upon a bitter afternoon, when I had gone over from Andover to see him for an

hour. He glanced over my head into the snow-storm. His face was not dreary; but wore one of its gravest looks.

"Oh," he said patiently, "I play with the dogs; or I go out and see the horses. And then I talk to Phœbe. — And I go into my study, and sit awhile."

"There is always some one to talk to," he said, in his gentle, grateful way; he spoke as if this fact were an unusual privilege.

One must have spent more than one invalid winter in a New England village, to understand in the least what such isolation was to a man of his gifts and social instincts, and in the deepening solitude of old age. Yet nothing could stir the roots which he had grown into the soil of his native pines.

To a friend who placed an empty cottage in Florida at his disposal, one winter, he replied: "I thank thee for thy kind offer of the Florida cottage; but I must live if I can, and die if I must, in Yankee land."

Whittier suffered from physical disabilities, — only those who knew him well ever suspected how much, or how seriously these affected the exercise of his great powers. He was but a wretched sleeper; usually, his biographer tells us, awake before the dawn; and accustomed to sleep with his curtain raised,

that he might watch the movement of the sunrise. It will be remembered how touchingly his old habit wrought upon him, on the day when he fell into his last sleep; when the nurse would have drawn the shade to darken the room, and he feebly waved his hand to order it raised again, that he might not lose the final sunrise of his life.

His love of nature was always something exquisite, and as fresh as a lad's to his last hour. I find his letters to me full of such touches as these: —

"These November days of Indian summer make me happy that I have lived to see them."

"I am glad to be permitted once more to see the miracle of spring."

Again, I find the page sprinkled with magnolia buds, hepaticas, and violets, and "when the golden dandelion comes, it will be really spring. I would rather see these flowers in the world beyond than the golden streets we are told of."

But I am borrowing even these few extracts from a previous publication of his letters, which I have no right to reproduce in any fullness here.

I have often heard him say that he called five hours' sleep a fine night's rest; and that for weeks at a time he would be unable to

write more than a few stanzas or a few lines. He worked under severer physical limitations than any other of the great writers of our country; yet how wholesome, how genial, how brave his work!

"He gave the people of his best. His worst he kept; his best he gave." Like other solitary lives of the higher caste, his chief happiness was in his friendships. Of these he had many among the elect spirits; and he sustained them with remarkable fidelity. I sometimes used to think that he found it almost too hard to criticise any of his friends, or to give us friendly blame: but if so, he atoned for that by the stimulating, northwesterly courage which he was sure to have in store for us; always giving us faith in ourselves and in our own work.

And, indeed, he could smite like an angel when he would. Of this we need no other witness than his famous poem on Daniel Webster, — "Ichabod." Though it is but just to say that I heard him during the last years of his life lament, if he did not quite repent, that poem. "I am afraid I was too severe," he would say: — "Does thee think I was?"

In memorable contrast to that of our great hermit ran the life of the Beacon Street poet,

Oliver Wendell Holmes. Yet the two were friends in the genuine sense of the word. Whittier's seclusion held many of his friendships off by a sceptre as delicate, but as definite, as the frosted fronds of one of his own pine-boughs. But in the case of Doctor Holmes, I know that the mutual attraction was affectionate and real. "We are more than literary friends," Whittier once said to me of the Autocrat. "We *love* each other."

I remember one winter day lunching with Whittier at Doctor Holmes's table, no other guests being present; and I think — for me — it was the dumbest lunch at which I ever sat. I found it impossible to talk, for my speech seemed a piece of intrusion on the society of larger planets, or a higher race than ours. To listen to those two was one of the privileges of a life-time. They interchanged their souls — now like boys, and now like poets; merrily or gravely; Whittier shining at his happiest, and Holmes scintillating steadily. As for that, he always did. Doctor Holmes was decidedly the most brilliant converser whom I have ever met.

It was my good fortune to receive him as a guest sometimes at Gloucester, in my summer home. For several years he acquired the kind habit of coming over from Beverly Farms to

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OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

spend a day, or a few hours, on our ruder shore. I remember that on his first call I felt moved as one does with a new guest, to show off our attractions at Eastern Point, and that I took him, thoughtlessly enough, down into the big trap gully in front of my châlet, where the purple lava and the bronze kelp and the green sea-weed brightened and faded beneath the rising and ebbing waves, whose "high-tide line" came almost to my doorstep.

It was very rough walking; and when I saw that it was not easy for him, — for he was even then an old man, — I cannot say what I might not have done by way of atoning for my mistake. I do not think I had extended my hand; I had only extended my thought; which he read by that marvelous perception of his, needing to wait for neither word nor motion.

"No, no!" he cried decidedly, "No, no, no! Don't you offer to help me! Don't you dare offer to help me! I could n't stand that."

I had nothing for it but to let him clamber about over the jagged boulders as he would, without protest or assistance; and I thanked the heavenly fates which brought him without accident back to the piazza. Here he found the breeze which blows eternally on Gloucester harbor too cool for him, and we retreated

indoors, where it seemed to be tacitly understood that we should agree to dispense with any further explorations; as from that time we did. By the open door and windows we sat and talked until his train left, or his carriage came. It might have been two hours or six; or we might have talked on for sixty, for aught I know, if this had been a world without enforced interruptions; — I wonder if there are none such?

As I look back upon those, to me, absorbing discussions, they seem to have been either theological or religious: there is a difference; and he gave himself freely to both. They had little beginning and no end, and each year he came back as fresh as ever to the pleasant fray.

His old grievance against Andover, where, as a lad in Phillips Academy, he was unjustly punished, lay bitterly in his heart to the end of his life; I think he had mingled this wrong a little in his imagination — not in his intellect — with what he conceived to be the errors of the evangelical view of religion; and that I represented to him, at first, a liberalized and modernized Andover, with which he could "have it out." After a little, he passed all that, and our talk deepened with our acquaintance. It grew franker and graver, and gentler.

When I first knew him, his repugnance to Orthodox Christianity, or to such aspects of it as an unfortunate personal experience had extended to him, was something more than bitter. He talked like a man who believed himself to be redressing a great moral wrong, and who felt obliged to emphasize his crusade whenever he could. In the latter years of his life I saw a great change in him in this respect. He talked less of theology, and more of Christianity; less of error, and more of truth; less of other men's failures to represent the divine life and purpose as it should be, and more of the great longings and struggle of the human heart, or of his own, to reach the "Everlasting Love," around whose throne are clouds and darkness.

More than once I have heard him speak of Canon Farrar's book, "Eternal Hope," with an emotion touching to witness, and ennobling to remember. His face broke, and the tears stirred at the mere mention of the title. "I cannot get beyond it," he said reverently. "'*Eternal Hope!*' I cannot talk about the title of that book. It moves me too much. It goes too deep."

We spoke more, as the evening of his life came on, of the more spiritual approaches to religious truth, and less of its controversial,

which, I hope, dwindled in importance to him, as he came nearer to the great solution of doubts and beliefs which awaits us all. Yet he always preserved a strong demarcation of reticence about his own inner spiritual life. This, old age did not weaken in the least. He withheld as obviously as he gave.

I remember that he was approached during the very last year, or years, by a friend acting in behalf of "McClure's Magazine," who had been asked to induce him, if possible, to consent to an interview with Professor Drummond and myself, upon the subject of Immortality; portions of this discussion, so far as he might select and personally revise them, were to be published. He declined, without a moment's hesitation, saying with his quick wit: "I will neither be lured nor mac-lured into anything of the kind!"

But in a personal letter he spoke more gravely on the matter: "Nothing would delight me more than to talk over Time and Eternity with you and Mr. Ward, but as to saying anything on these subjects to be *reported*, I would as soon send a piece of my spinal marrow to one of these omnivorous editors. . . . Perhaps I may not think it worth while to express myself with absolute freedom on the deepest question."

Doctor Holmes's appreciation of human suffering seemed to me as exquisite as almost any that I ever approached. It did not stop with his heart, but permeated his whole intellect. For so merry a man, one so brimming with fun, his sense of the universal misery was extraordinary.

"Outside, I laugh," he said to me once. "Inside, I never laugh. It is impossible. The world is too sad."

"Oh, the poor *women!*" he said again, turning to me a face broken with compassion. "It is as much as one can bear, to think of the sufferings of women — what they endure — what they always have — in this world!"

"How can God bear it?" he cried, at another time, suddenly starting from silence which had fallen upon our discussion; — "this ball of anguish forever spinning around before Him, and the great hum of its misery going up to His ears!"

Yet who was so quick and warm of heart as he, to give happiness or to share it?

Out of courtesy to his biographer, I do not feel at liberty here to publish his letters; but I am tempted to select portions of one, which I am sure neither law nor gospel would forbid me to claim as my very own; and that is the

letter received from him a few days after my marriage. It was one of the first — as it was one of the kindest — to reach us. I cannot give it entire, but extract: —

"You have made me cry a great many times. Now you make me smile with gratification to know that you are anchored in that happy haven where the highest blessings of life are to be found by those who are fitted for its manifold experiences.

"I hope the gates of yours will never be ajar, but always wide open to all old friendships and all good influences, and always closed against every ill from which your earthly lot can be protected.

"My wishes for you are very many, my prayers are very brief, but they overflow with the sincerest desire for your happiness in this world for which you have done so much, and in that other into which you have looked with clearer eyes than ours."

The last time that he came to see us was in Gloucester, a year and a half, I think, before he died. Our little house had been moved since his last visit, and I tried to show him certain of the best changes in the landscape. He tried, politely, but it was pitifully evident that he could not see beyond the bright marsh colors in the autumn light just outside our gate.

The horizon of the sea, I am sure, was quite beyond his fading eyes.

We begged him to try to get out from town and see our winter home in Newton, where we cherish some remarkable scenery : but he shook his head, pathetically, without speaking. After a moment's silence, he touched his eyes. "I could not see it," he said. "There is no more new scenery for me till I see the outlines of the Eternal City."

I saw him after this but twice, once at the table of our best of friends and publishers, Mr. Houghton — I wonder, have they seen each other by this time, in the New Country? — where I thought him more than usually quiet ; either ill or sad ; but doing his best to give the bright wine of thought that was always expected of Doctor Holmes in society. And, by the way, how truly he loved it!

"I have," he said to me once, "what I call my dinner-table intimacies. I enjoy them very much."

My last look at him was in his own study, overlooking the silver-gray color of Charles River, on a winter afternoon. We talked — much in the old way — but more soberly, and ever more gently. His soul seemed to be brimming over with kindness to every form of life in this world, and in the world beyond.

Even the Andover schoolmaster was forgiven and forgotten. Of Andover theology he had now nothing to say. His heart seemed to be melting with tenderness, with desire to give happiness and to spare pain; and he like one who waited, without regret or disturbance, the summons to that

> "Love Divine that stooped to share
> Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear."

He insisted on coming downstairs with me when I left; he took my hand silently; upon his face was the look which only the aged wear, when they part from younger friends; as if he dared not say, "It is the last time;" — but knew it, though I did not.

IX

CELIA THAXTER: LUCY LARCOM: LYDIA MARIA CHILD: PHILLIPS BROOKS: THE OLD MAIDS' PARADISE

For many years one of the brightest figures in literary Boston, was Celia Thaxter.

She had, if not more leisure, perhaps more temperament and, at all events, more strength for social life than some others of the group; and she was always sure of a welcome which, in itself, was a great temptation to earn it. She was the best of good company. Everybody wanted her. Hearty, happy, wholesome, she rose through a decorous drawing-room or sedate library, like a breeze from her own island waves. When she had gone, one felt as if an East wind had suddenly died down.

She was the most fearless, the most independent of beings. It mattered little to her what other people did or thought; at least, on secondary subjects. She was never afraid to be herself. To certain modulations of manner she never consented. "Celia Thaxter's laugh" is well remembered. No subdued and conven-

tional mirth softly rippled from her broad chest and honest larynx. When she laughed, she pealed. This merry ring was infectious. It was as impossible to hear it, and not laugh too, as it is for the feet that love dance music to keep still before it. She was the incarnation of good spirits.

Her vigorous physique had much to do with this, for she had her share of the sorrows of life. These she bore characteristically, without much complaint, with some suppressed cynicism, and with that bubbling faith in brighter futures so easy to the sanguine nature.

I knew her as one does a comrade with whom one is never intimate; but whom one regards affectionately, and whose history one makes guesses at, or forms opinions of, from a definite distance. I do not offer of her, in any sense, the reminiscences of a confidential friend.

Once, I remember, I vexed her by something in a letter which I wrote her apropos of a religious discussion that we had held, in an interrupted form. She was then at the bitterest turn in the long avenue that leads through defiance to acceptance of religious truth. But she forgave me, I think, — I am sure I did her, — and I am very sure that in the later years of her life she would have given the plea of any Christian a different reception. I did not know her

CELIA THAXTER

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intimately enough to say just how far the growth of her religious character carried her, in intellectual form, and I have no right to mark its boundaries. But I think the longing for it was always in her.

"If I believed as you do," she said to me once, fiercely, "nothing would daunt me! *Nothing would daunt me!*"

I was present one day when she was describing to a little group a wreck off Appledore: how she sat at her window, watching one of the cruelest gales of the midwinter Atlantic gather its forces. The breakers upon her own rocks were at their worst. A solitary sail blurred on the racing horizon, and beat up; the vessel struck on the reef, and broke to pieces. The Islands were helpless to help. It was impossible to extend an oar. Watchers on that little spot of life could only sit and see the game of death go on: it was not a snarl and a snap, but a slow torture. For the crew had hung and clung to the teeth of a rock around which the whirlpool played; and there their distant figures, drenched and drowning, pleaded for their lives in the sight of the warm-hearted woman who could only watch them slip and drop off, one by one.

I think she said they clung there for five hours before they surrendered to the sea.

When Mrs. Thaxter had told the story in her own inimitable manner, with the vividness of vitriol she lifted her eyes, flung them straight at mine, with the dreariest look that I ever saw on the face of any doubter in the darkest den of despair.

"Fools to cling!" she cried. "They were fools—*fools* to cling!"

I have never been one of those fortunate people who have their happy thoughts at tongue's end; my repartees are apt to wait for my pen; else I should have answered her: —

"Philosophers to cling! While there is hope of life eternal, the saddest mortal life is worth the living. Philosophers to cling!"

It is a pleasant thought to me that this gifted woman, with the luxurious heart and the eager brain, was herself philosopher enough to cling, until a distinct measure of spiritual light and peace came to her later on.

She was full of a certain wit, or perhaps more exactly, humor, which was native to herself, and strong of the salt of her own seaweeds.

One day, I remember, she sat painting china — which she did after a graceful and original fashion — when some one present ventured a commonplace about the delights of her island life: its solitude, its peacefulness, its opportuni-

ties to study nature, and so on. It was in winter, and it was snowing. She looked out of the window into the clashing Boston street, then threw back her head, and laughed out long and joyously.

"Did you ever try it?" she said; "I've had enough of the wilderness. Give *me* a horse-car!"

Mrs. Thaxter was of attractive personal appearance, retaining some suggestion of the beauty for which she was distinguished in her first youth; when, betrothed as a mere child, and a bride at sixteen, the Miranda of the Shoals wedded the first man whom she had known, and ventured upon the mainland of life at the age when, if she had been a girl of our day under the usual conditions, she would have been preparing to "come out," or fitting for college.

Like a pale purple aster beside a gorgeous golden-rod, the sweet wraith of Lucy Larcom flits in beside that of Mrs. Thaxter in my memory.

It falls away again quickly, for I saw Miss Larcom but seldom: I knew her chiefly through her letters, which reached me at irregular intervals. I had the sincerest respect both for her personality and for her work. One of the ex-

editors of the "Atlantic Monthly," himself a brilliant writer, once reviewed a book of hers in these words: —

"There is something in this volume which we do not mind calling genius."

She was not a woman to mind being "called names" in this fashion; but undoubtedly had her laugh out, with the editor, at this clever turn of words.

The value of her work is beyond question: the strength of it continually surprises one who is, from the surface, chiefly impressed with her gentleness of spirit.

She was always more or less in the thick of a struggle for existence; life was never easy to her, but she gave ease to it. There was a kind of comfortableness about her, which, I think, impressed me more than anything else in her personality. Miss Larcom had a fine presence. She was large and well-proportioned, and had a certain sort of handsomeness. The well-known picture of her in the bonnet is the best that I have ever seen.

She had absolute simplicity of manner; I never saw in her a trace of either embarrassment or elaboration, much less of affectation. She was a motherly-looking woman. A stranger might have guessed her to be in the process of putting several boys through college;

LUCY LARCOM

not in the least worried about their debts, and never nagging them about their scrapes.

This ease of nature sometimes led to a little dreaminess, or absence of practical attention, of which her friends were laughingly and lovingly aware. There is a story told of a ride that she took with Mr. Whittier — I cannot now recall it in his precise words.

The hill was steep, Mr. Whittier was driving. The horse was gay. The load — on the lady's side, at least — was not light. Lucy Larcom was talking, and she talked on. I think the subject was the life to come. At all events, it was some abstract theme, grave and high.

The horse grew unruly. The buggy lurched and rolled. Whittier grasped the reins valiantly, anticipating a possible accident, and centring his being on the emergency. But Lucy talked on serenely.

The horse threatened to break. The danger redoubled. The buggy sagged heavily, on Lucy's side. Still, peacefully she murmured on.

"Lucy!" exploded the poet, at last. "Lucy! If thee does not stop talking till I get this horse in hand, thee will be in heaven before thee wants to!"

There was in those days in Boston a dear

old lady living "all alone in a shoe," one might say, so narrow was her home ; she was seldom seen in society, but was valuable to it, accordingly. I saw her only twice, but she impressed me as a strong and lofty personality, so far above the usual social human being that her solitude and the sparseness of her environment seemed to partake of the character of luxuries which most of us were unfit to share.

This was Lydia Maria Child. Some thoughtful hostess — I think it was Mrs. Fields — took me one day to call on Mrs. Child. At that time this distinguished abolitionist was occupying lodgings so plain, in a quarter of Boston so much less than fashionable, that I felt a certain awe upon me, as if I were visiting a martyr in prison. There was no exaggeration in this feeling, when one remembered that this woman's life had been one long suppression of self, and obliteration of that background of personal comfort which the rest of us consider essential to our own portraits. It is well known that Mrs. Child sacrificed the prospect of a brilliant literary future to her convictions in the movement for freeing the American slaves.

It is not so well known that she had all her life expended such means as she had in private charities, denying herself every luxury

and many common comforts, in order to compass the power to relieve or to prevent suffering.

We climbed the steep stairs of her boarding-house thoughtfully. Each one of them meant some generous check which Mrs. Child had drawn for the benefit of something or somebody, choosing this restricted life as the price of her beneficence.

She received us in a little sitting-room which seemed to me dreariness personified. Everything was neat, respectable, and orderly; but the paucity of that interior contrasted sadly with the rich nature of its occupant.

I particularly remember the tint of the carpet — a lifeless brown. The room was so devoid of color as to seem like a cell; and the winter day had been a dark one.

As we sat talking, the sun battled through the clouds, and then we saw that Mrs. Child had "the afternoon side" of her boarding-house, and knew how to make the most of it. She rose quickly and, taking a little prism which she evidently treasured, hung it in the window so that it caught the southwestern ray.

Instantly the colorless room leaped with rainbows. The sweet old lady stood smiling, in the midst of them; she directed them this way and that, and threw them all over the

empty spaces and plain furniture. She had, I thought, a little in her mind, the consciousness of my companion's own beautiful library and richly endowed life. It was as if she said, — "You see I have not much to offer; but I give you of my best."

This dedicated woman had no luxuries, neither upholstery nor bric-à-brac, as accessories to her peaceful welcome; — only God's sunshine, and the rainbows that she knew how to make out of it.

I never see a prism without thinking of her noble life; and I keep one in my study windows to this day, partly in memory of this beautiful and pathetic incident. It did me good, and I do not want to forget it.

Mrs. Child, at our request, talked about her anti-slavery experiences. These moved me very much. But I find that the thing which impressed me most, and has stayed with me longest, was this.

"How did you know?" one of us asked, "in the midst of so much doubt and danger, and possible fraud — how did you always know just whom and where to trust, when these fugitives appealed to you for help?"

"Oh!" she said, "there was a pass-word. It carried any escaping slave through the underground railway, to safety. Sometimes it

LYDIA MARIA CHILD

was written on a slip of torn, soiled paper. Sometimes it was only whispered for dear life's sake. But any colored person who came to us with that pass-word was received and passed on without a question. It carried him anywhere, and gave him every chance that we could command."

She paused, and looked at the rainbows in the lodging-house window dreamily. Her heart had gone far back.

"What *was* the pass-word?" we ventured to urge.

"*I* was a stranger and ye took *Me* in," softly said the old abolitionist.

There was one man in Boston of whom nobody ever saw enough; and I almost too little to offer what I have kept of his great memory.

My acquaintance with Phillips Brooks was rather one of friendliness than of friendship; which is a large word, and one demanding conscientious interpretation, especially in the case of a man in manner so genial to hundreds, and at heart so reserved from all but a few. Yet the more vivid recollections of him which come to my pen seem, at least to me, to have almost too much value to be lost; and I venture to insert one or two of them here.

I met Dr. Brooks only now and then; and

his letters were brief, and usually concerned some deed or impulse of mercy or of professional service. My recollections of him, such as they are, I find to be either definitely of a grave and religious nature, or sparkling with social gayety — one of the two extremes. I do not recall him at all in what I once heard called "a comfortable, middling view of things."

In conversation he was one of the merriest of entertainers. Sometimes I used to think him almost too ready to let the occasion float away in jest, while I, like so many others, would have chosen to sound with him some theme of height or depth; but of course one can readily understand how weary his nerve might have become of the seriousness of life, and how much it needed "the light touch."

For this reason, perhaps, the occasions in which the man revealed himself with power and solemnity are more distinct in my mind.

Once, I had asked a favor of him: that he would receive a little friend of mine, a sweet lassie, who had listened to his preaching till her heart had chosen him for her priest. She was scarcely more than a child, but not at all a common one; her need was genuine, and not to be confounded with a girl's mere hero-worship for a popular preacher. In his own

hearty way he welcomed her to his house, whither it was expected that I would accompany her. I did so; occupying myself, I remember, with a pile of fresh galleys in another room, while the child went into the preacher's study.

"We will stay," I said, "but ten minutes. Send her out to me when the time is up."

Fifteen minutes passed — a half hour — my proof-sheets were all corrected before the clergyman came out with the child. He had given her the heart of the morning, his working-time. Who knows what the little maiden's spirit needed and received of the great preacher's? For the child died before another winter fell. Did that strong, priestly heart prepare her for the new life — neither knowing why she had sought, or he had given, the strength to take the last, short steps?

I turned to speak to them, as the pastor and parishioner came out of the study; but one glance stopped the words upon my lips. The tears were falling down his face, unchecked, unnoticed. He could not speak, and did not try; but solemnly handed the little maiden to my charge, and I left without a word.

Afterwards, when her little, lovely life came to its sharp end, I wrote to tell him. His reply indicated that the interview had made as

deep an impression upon him as the witness of it had left upon me.

The last time that I saw Mr. Brooks to speak with him, was at a memorable crisis in his history. It was close upon the date of his acceptance of the Bishopric of Massachusetts; but this fact was not yet generally known. The movement of his own mind at the time, while his decision to leave Trinity Church forever was still seething, was as solemn as prayer.

If one had any doubt of this, the sight of the man, on the occasion to which I refer, would have made it clear to the dullest perception.

We were at lunch, — four of us, — Mr. Brooks, Doctor Holmes, Mr. Ward and myself, with friends whose hospitality is expert in the art of selecting the difficult and delightful number of guests which is more than the graces, but less than the muses.

Mr. Brooks was very quiet at first — almost silent; and it seemed to my slight, social experience with him, unprecedentedly sober. But Doctor Holmes's conversational genius soon struck the sparks from the smouldering fire in the preacher's heart, and the two men began to talk. The rest of us held the breath to listen, as our hostess, with her distinguished tact,

stirred the flame when she would ; and one of the most remarkable conversations which I ever heard, followed.

On Mr. Brooks's part, this was more than grave, — it was devout almost to the point of exhortation or prophecy. Doctor Holmes played with the great stream of religious feeling for a few moments, but he quickly and reverently swung himself along with it : I shall never forget the expression with which he regarded Mr. Brooks. It was one of unalloyed trust and admiration ; at moments it had a beautiful wistfulness, as if he might have said : —

" Of course, you know I can't altogether agree with you ; but you almost make me wish I could ! "

As the talk deepened, Mr. Brooks roused and raised himself and us to one of those rare altitudes of which one always says afterwards, " It was good to be there."

He began to talk about the duties of the upper to the lower classes of society, and of the Christian to the irreligious. He spoke rapidly, then earnestly, then eagerly, hotly, without fear and without reproach, like the Christian Bayard that he was. At the last, he pushed on into monologue — a thing I never heard him do before ; and no one, not even

the king of Boston conversers, cared to interrupt him.

The preacher's eyes burned over our heads into the peaceful perspective of Charles River; his voice took on the priestly ring; he seemed to hear the orders of authority "we could not hear," and to see visions which "we might not see." He scathed the fashionable classes for their follies, and flung a kind of holy scorn at the paltriness and cowardice which excused itself from contact with the suffering and the loathsomeness of the lower world.

To my surprise, he spoke of the Salvation Army in language of deep respect. He honored its work. He prophesied heartily for its future. He spoke contemptuously of the nervousness of people of ease about infection in clothing brought from the sweat-shops, and from homes whose horrors few of us troubled a heart-throb to alleviate. With sacred indignation he rebuked the heathen of the West End, who cared neither for their own souls nor for those of other men. He scored worldliness of heart and life in a lofty denunciation, to which it was impossible to offer a protesting word.

He mentioned, by name, a certain fashionable men's club on the Back Bay.

"The Salvation Army," he cried, "ought

to be sent *there*. Nobody needs them more. They ought to go right through such a place as that, and preach New Testament religion!"

At this point, Doctor Holmes suggested, in a subdued voice: —

"But, Doctor Brooks, such men as those are not going to listen to the Salvation Army. It seems to me that *you* are the man to go into the —— Club, and preach Christianity."

Mr. Brooks made no reply. The rest of us took the thought up, and urged him a little. But he fell into a silence, so sad that it was impossible to break it. His gaze wandered from us, solemnly. Was he renewing the conflict of soul which must have preceded his determination to leave the pastorate of his loved and loving people? Was he heartsick with his own great ideal of what a Christian teacher might achieve and must forever fail to? Was he thinking of his limits in the light of his aspirations? He talked no more. In a few moments he abruptly and silently left us.

I was once talking with a man of well-known gifts and power who is a pronounced unbeliever in Christianity, — indeed, a free-thinker of a confirmed type. In answer to some personal plea of mine for the rationality of faith, he exclaimed: —

"A Christian? *I?* If I were to be a *Chris-*

tian, I should have to be — why, I should have to be such a man as Phillips Brooks!"

That instinctive reverence in the man of this world for the man of the other I have always called the finest tribute to Mr. Brooks that I have ever heard.

One of the pleasantest recollections which I have of Phillips Brooks is not at all connected with Boston, but brings me to my life at Gloucester, and will be given later in this fragmentary story, which is now well overdue at my own summer home upon the rough shores of Cape Ann.

It fell to me, rather early in life, to try one of those experiments at home-making for one's self in which unmarried women venture less often, I think, than would be good for them and for society at large. My father's absence from Andover in search of his lost health having become a settled part of the summer programmes, I pursued, for a while, the usual career of summer boarder. The usual restlessness for "higher things" resulted.

I had engaged rooms, one summer, upon the other side of Cape Ann, privately known to its North Shore residents as the Pacific Ocean, meaning thereby the region of Ipswich

PHILLIPS BROOKS

LIBRARY

Bay. Our quarters were far from the sea, in the thick of a village, and opposite a grammar school. I bore it for a week, and then, one desperate day, I started upon an exploring expedition. We drove on for seven miles, crossing the noisiest and dustiest and fishiest of little cities, without enthusiasm. Gloucester, as to her business sections, did not prove alluring, but we pushed on eastward down her harbor shore.

Suddenly, at the end of our journey, hot, dusty and discouraged, toiling up what is known as Patch's Hill, we brought our tired pony to a halt, and drew the breath of unexpected and undreamed-of delight. We had discovered Eastern Point.

Out of the salt dust, out of the narrow, scorching streets, by the fish-flakes and the fish-teams, past the rude roads whose boulders seemed to have been only "spatted" down by the whimsical street-commissioner, Time, we came upon the fairest face of all the New England coast, — the Eastern side of Gloucester Harbor.

The traveling American, who has seen the world, often tells me that here is one of the most beautiful scenes upon the whole round face of it. On this point I am not authorized by experience to testify ; but my private con-

victions are that it would not be easy to find a lovelier bit of coast survey.

There is a nook known as Wonson's ; it was then a sheltered, peaceful spot, scarcely devastated by the tramp of the summer boarder, and so undisturbed that I only knew when callers came because the chickens ran past the window to get away from them.

A cottage with its feet in the water and its eyes on the harbor received me ; and there, close upon the gorge with the lava trap, and glancing over the little beach where the northwest gales clear out the cool dashes of green and purple and bronze, and where mast and mainsail cut brown and sharp against the gold beyond Ten Pound Island, and the towers of old Gloucester (called by architects picturesque for America) rise against the sunset, I spent the preliminary summers which made me slave to Gloucester shore for life. The result was the châlet known to my "kind readers" as The Old Maids' Paradise.

This I built, and there I lived from May to November, or nearly that. The waves played almost to my door ; in winter the spray dashed upon the piazza. The fishermen, my neighbors, drew up their dories upon the rocks in front of me ; the foreground was marked by lobster-pots, and nets spread upon the scanty grass to

dry or to mend. The fishermen's children — who could hold an oar at the age of three, and whom I have seen placed by their fathers sitting straight in the stern of a dory when they were three months old — played over my rocks, or brought me blue-tipped innocence and white violets every year when I returned.

"You come up with the spring flowers," prettily said one imaginative little neighbor, a fisherman's daughter.

Opposite my study windows, cruel and beautiful as any siren of fable, ran the reef of Norman's Woe.

The shore of Fresh Water Cove made a fair, green blush in the gray outline of the stern coast which ran from Norman's Woe to Pavilion Beach. When I rowed, or was rowed, over to it (it was a good pull of a mile and a half or more), if the wind were up, or there were "short chops" upon the harbor, and the landing became a matter of skill, I used always to think of the two lines in an old hymn: —

> "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> Stand dressed in living green."

When the breeze struck from the east or southeast, then the whole length of the western shore of the harbor broke into white fire. Hours were short in watching this blaze of foam. Suddenly it shot up — call it fifty feet,

call it twice that, according to the vigor of the storm — in jets and great tongues; as if it believed itself able to lick the solid cliffs away. Seen through the shaking window of my throbbing little house, it was easy to believe that it could.

Perhaps the wind fell, but failed to die with the day. Then came on the wonder of a stormy sunset. All Gloucester harbor tossed against it. The bows of the anchored fleet rose and sank angrily. The head-lights came out one by one, and flared, surging up and down. Ten Pound Light flashed out for the night; but her blinder was on, towards us. The little city, glorified now, forgiven of her fish, and her dust, and her bouncing roads, loved and dreamed over, and sung in heart and pen, melted all through her pretty outlines against the massive colors of the west.

Then, off Eastern Point, far to the left, where the shadow fell, sprang out the red, revolving flash of Cape Ann Light.

The fishermen's children are in their beds; the rocks are quiet, but for the cannonade of the surf. Shut away from the world, shut in with the sea, I light my lonely fire, and thank God for my own hearth, and for Gloucester shore.

I had a little dog in those days. With the

lady who mothered my home, and the maid who served it, he formed "my family;" we three sat in the windows, and heard the summer people — as they grew, alas, in force — pass by our châlet, chatting busily. Often their talk would be of us.

The name of that dog, by the way, was Daniel Deronda; and one day it fell to me, with my own ears, to overhear these authenticated words: —

"Mamma?" It was a little fellow who spoke, tugging at his mother's fingers as he scrambled over the boulders. "Mamma, I want to know; — is this where *the Derondas live?*"

Such was human fame; and such will it ever be! The eyes that see us, see with their own natures and from their own focus; not from ours or with ours. Worse might befall me than to be known as one of the Derondas.

I looked solemnly at the little dog (he was the only masculine member of the household), and said: —

"It is the doom of women, Dan. Seven pounds of your lordly sex — and with bangs down to his nose, into the bargain — orders our identity away from us. We must make the best of it, Dan; and you and I know that it 's all the same in the end."

X

GLOUCESTER

LIFE at Gloucester began very much as other life begins in the first delightful possession of one's "ain fireside." Is happiness essentially selfish? For some years after my cottage was built I surrendered my summers to the luxury of entertaining. I remember those as the years of the friends. I was slow in asking whether the North Shore had other claims upon me than those of giving pleasure to other comfortable people, and receiving more than I gave. Having waited, apparently long enough for me to ask, fate abruptly told me without the formality of a question.

One summer evening, in a year of whose date I cannot be sure, except that it was in the seventies, I was driving with a friend through the main street of East Gloucester. It was after tea, and a sky, translucent overhead, was burning down towards the west, preparing for one of the famous Gloucester sunsets.

We were driving through a weir of stores and

fish-firms and fish-flakes — this last, it should be said, is the technical name for the frames or trellises on which salt fish is dried. For Gloucester, it must be understood, is the most important fishing port in the world, and Fish, whether dead or living, is always spelled there with a capital. In fact, there is a dignity about this form of commerce, upon which, to the reduction of most other kinds of interests, Gloucester insists. Her summer guests may come and go, may pay or not, may criticise or adore, but her fish bite on forever. The result of my own observation has been that Gloucester, in her heart of hearts, regards her large summer population with a certain contempt. We are weak on the topics of main-sheets, and jib-hanks, of blocks and "popple-ballast," and seines. We are not learned in the times when herring strike and mackerel are due. We cannot man a Grand Banker in a gale. We do not go "haddockin'" in March. We do not pack "Cape Ann turkey" to the limits of the globe. Our incomes, if we have any, are drawn from invisible sources looked upon with instinctive suspicion. They are neither caught with a hook nor salted in a box, nor telephoned to the Board of Trade when the cargoes come in. We are more or less idle folk, who wander about the streets, (who knows

why?) or sun ourselves stupidly on the red and purple rocks, or dig for clams on the beaches at high tide, or exasperate the farmers by trampling down the hay, and letting the cattle into the apple-orchards. We are artists, whose crop of white umbrellas sprouts everywhere, and bothers everybody, and whose brushes do not know a back-stay from corn-silk. We are boarders who capsize the cat-boats, or pay by the hour to sail in a calm and don't know any better; cottagers who create homes in extraordinary localities hitherto little respected; or even writers who put Gloucester adoringly into the magazines out of the impulses of our loyal and loving hearts, and are hated accordingly of all men for the tribute's sake.

Perhaps every line of this page may cost its writer a friend in Gloucester — who can tell? Yet I mean only gracious things by the dear old place, which I have loved for twenty years. I devoutly believe and firmly proclaim that Gloucester Harbor is the most adorable spot in this part of the world in which to spend the summer; and that he who has never known her Junes and her Septembers, her wonderful downs (said to be the only specimens of the real thing on our coast), the warm heart of her fishing-folk, and the colors of her waves, seen

NILES'S BEACH, GLOUCESTER

returning from afternoon sails in a light South-wester, misses something out of life, which the next will remind him that he lacks. I am aware that this is a strong statement, and beyond it I cannot go. This does not mean that I am unconscious of the faults in the loveliest of places, though for love's sake I may pass them lightly by.

All seaport towns drink. I do not know if Gloucester be any thirstier than other places of her kind. I like to think not — but, on the summer evening of which I speak, it first came to my thought or knowledge that this little city seethed with tempted men, having peculiar difficulties and dangers and needing peculiar treatment.

As we drove through the chief street of East Gloucester, we saw a crowd thickening before us in front of a store or shop, whose existence I did not remember to have observed before. It was a large crowd for a small place, and evidently under intense excitement. All along the sides of the street women who did not join it came to their doors and looked out soberly. They were white to the lips, every woman of them; some of them shook their fists in the direction of the crowd; some wept, some seemed to curse, and some to pray.

"If men folks *will* do such things, they

must *expect* such things to happen!" cried one matron.

"I hope they'll raze the place to the ground! I hope they'll fire it to ashes! I hope they won't leave stick nor stone of it till morning!" said another, in the deep tones of irreproachable anathema.

I had stopped my horse, and begged to be told what had happened; but it was some time before the women paid attention enough to me to answer my question. I was only a "summer boarder," alien to them, and to the sorrows of their lives. I was of far less importance to them than the school of mackerel which entered or swam past Gloucester Harbor; one might easily say of less than the barnacles on the old piers.

"Have n't you heard?" said a woman at last, scornfully. "Why, it happened in —— ——'s rum-shop."

Now, I had been in East Gloucester more summers than I cared just then to remember, and never till that moment had I known that —— —— had a rum-shop in the centre of the town.

"There 's a man murdered there," continued the speaker more gently, observing perhaps the expression of my face. "He 's just dead. Him and this other fellar had words, and he

drove a knife into him and out again three times. He 's stone dead, layin' there on the floor. . . . See the men folks crowdin' round to look at him! If men folks will do such things, they must *expect* such things to happen! I hope they won't leave stick nor stone to that place, come mornin'!"

"Was he a married man?"

"She lives up to the Block, and the young ones."

"How many?"

"Twelve."

"Has anybody been to see this poor creature — the widow? Has any woman gone to her?"

"Hey?" staring. "I guess not. Not that I know of."

I turned my horse and drove straight to the smitten family. My friend (who had the worst of it) kindly agreed to sit in the carriage among the gathering people while I went into the tenement. I felt like thanking her warmly, for it would have been easy to make that little decision hard for me; or to turn my own mind in the trembling of a choice, upon which, I came to think afterwards, a good deal that may have been important swung.

I went in. It was like other places of its kind, neither better nor worse. Such homes

were not unfamiliar to me, but I had never entered one before on such an errand. To my selfish relief I found that some news-bearer had preceded me, and that it did not devolve upon me to break the tidings to the widow. She was pacing up and down the dark, close rooms like a large creature in a very little cage. She uttered strange, monotonous shrieks. She did not notice my entrance. In fact, no one paid any attention to me. The twelve (I think it was twelve) children, in various stages of grief and fright, were scattered about. Her oldest son leaned against the wall, and looked helplessly at the screaming woman. She wailed, — "Oh, ain't it hard? ain't it, ain't it?"

A neighbor came in, a big, red woman, and offered consolation in this form: "Mis' ——! Mis' ——! Be still now, there, *and have the patience of God!*"

This modest and moderate demand, strange to say, was disregarded by the afflicted creature, who moaned on pitifully.

I was an uninvited guest in that stricken household, and it seems like a breach of something for which we have no precise name for me to dwell too far upon the details of such a scene as no spectator could easily forget or describe. In point of fact, nothing and no-

body quieted the woman ; and so I went up, saying no words at all, and took her in my arms.

For a little her wailing continued steadily ; then I saw, at last, that her eyes had fallen upon my gloves. They were white, like the rest of my dress ; the room was heavy with the advancing dusk, and I suppose they made a spot of light, by which her frenzied sight was arrested. Her sobbing broke ; she turned, and looked up into my face. Still I did not speak, but only held her quietly. . . .

I stayed with her till the body was brought home, and then we drove away. As we turned into the main street, I heard low cries from the people: "There he is! There he is! They 've caught him! They 've got the murderer! He ran and hid down to the water — but there he is!"

A carryall rapidly driven, and closely guarded by officers, passed us. The sunset was dying, and against a cold streak of wintry color, beyond the western shore of the harbor, I saw the profile of the murderer ; as pale as that other face which I had left with a woman wailing over it. He was a very young man, they told me, and came of a self-respecting family.

I had read, of course, like other intelligent people, of women who entered rum-shops on

moral and religious errands; in fact, I think once in Andover, when I was a very young lady, I personally besought a liquor-seller in behalf of some ruined family in which I was interested, to abandon the error of his ways; he received me politely and continued them steadily. But as for what is known in this country as the Temperance Movement, it was as unfamiliar to me as the gossip of Tahiti. I was reared in circles which pursued their own proportion of Christian charity in their own ways, and which knew but little of this form of ethical progress. In a word, I was without education for that kind of service to humanity; and I had, hitherto, paid no more attention to it than any woman of society. In fact, if the truth were to be told, I had, perhaps, little more confidence in the wisdom of its prevailing methods. Ignorance is always prejudice, and I was prejudiced in proportion to mine.

That Gloucester murder, and the short sunset hour which I spent in that devastated home, did for me what all the temperance conventions and crusades of America, generaled by braver and broader-minded women than I, had failed to do. All my traditions went down, and my common sense and human heart came up. From that day "I asked no questions; I had no replies;" but gave my sympathy with-

out paltry hesitation to the work done by the women of America for the salvation of men endangered or ruined by the liquor habit.

"I am going into that rum-shop next Sunday," I announced, "to hold a service."

"*You?*" My friends stared at me anxiously. Would two physicians and the legal certificate of incarceration be needed shortly? Afterwards I remembered how they looked. At the time I scarcely noticed it, but proceeded on my way with the absorption of all young reformers in a new enthusiasm.

Of course my first step was to visit the bartender. I was received with drawing-room politeness. He was more than willing that I should hold a religious service in his saloon. He was, I thought, personally very grateful. He felt the odium under which he stood. He was pale and perturbed. He welcomed me with significant cordiality. Indeed, I think he looked upon me for the moment as his individual savior from social downfall. It had not occurred to me that I was enlisting my energies to protect the rum-seller, and I must say that this amusing view of the situation rather staggered me. But, concluding to ignore it gracefully, I went on with my plan for the Sunday.

"You'll say, won't you," pleaded the dealer

in death, "that this ain't my fault? You 'll tell 'em it might have happened anywhere, won't you? Why, it might have happened in a church! There 's murders do. You 'll say so; won't you, ma'am?"

Without committing myself on this delicate point, I arranged our little programme, securing the help of a lovely gray-haired "lady from Philadelphia" — for this was in the days when my own hair was still so dark that I liked to be mothered a little in difficult positions. We went into the saloon the next Sunday and opened our short services. Now, my companion had been trained by Phillips Brooks in his younger pastorate, and she was far better qualified than I to conduct the service. But with the pertinacity of gentle women she refused. She would read, she would sing, she would help, but speak she would not.

"You *will* not?" pleaded I, "but I *cannot*. I never opened my mouth in a public place in my life. I shall drop of stage fright — and think of the scene! It will be little less exciting than the murder. I am a coward born, bred, and graduated on this point. It is morally impossible for me to speak in that or any other place."

But I prevailed nothing against her, and speak I had to.

The saloon was of course packed. It overflowed to the porch, and into the street, and back through the three little rooms within rooms, which, according to my limited observation, seem to characterize the grog-shops of our native land; an architectural peculiarity into whose causes or effects I have never penetrated.

There were a few women there to sing for us, and certain of the wives of the men who frequented the shop; but our hearers were chiefly men, and precisely the men who were the usual customers of this and kindred places. A great, red stain in the floor was covered from sight by the crowd.

To say that the audience was respectful is to say little enough. If we had been angels from the clouds or courts of heaven, we could not have been received with more deference, more delicacy, or more attention. To say that no disturbance of any kind took place is again to say too little for the occasion. Not a foot stirred, not a lip whispered; indeed, it is quite within bounds to say that not an eye wandered. We read a little — not too much — from the Bible, and we sang a hymn or two, and I said a few words, and we came away. Those men listened to us as if they had never heard a message of mercy before in all their

lives, and never might again. I remember that some of them hung their heads upon their breasts like guilty children, and that they looked ashamed and sorry; but most of them met us in the eye, and drank what we said thirstily. Their attention and gravity amounted to solemnity, and had the appearance of resolution. But of that, who can testify?

We did not too much blame these men; they had reasons for getting drunk, which life had never made apparent to us: nor did we berate the rum-seller; we were his guests. We read and spoke to them of better things; that was all. I remember that we read from the Revelation about the dead, great and small, who stand before God to be judged; and I can never forget how these men looked, as I laid down my father's Bible, with those words.

Life has given and withheld much from me that has been or has seemed to be rich and valuable. It has never given me another hour when I felt that I had found the chief privilege of existence, as I felt when I forgot myself and pleaded with Heaven for those miserable men; nor has it withheld much that I should have treasured more than the power to continue my happy work among them.

It lasted for but three years. Though it began, it did not seem to begin with the

murder ; for, after a few Sundays our services in the saloon came to an end. The bartender's religious character was not prominently developed, and his hospitality cooled as the excitement waned. Not wishing to intrude upon it, — for, after all, the rum was his, and the legal right to sell it, — we devoted ourselves for a little to the concerns of the fatherless family, and returned to the normal course of summer existence. Without were drunkards and murderers, and we thought of them no more.

I thought of them no more, at least not then. But God's lessons are not lost so easily as that. The next year, when the Old Maids' Paradise was opened for the season, a person indistinctly known to our domestic world as "the vegetable man" one day quietly made his way from the back door to the front, and boldly demanded that I should visit the Reform Club and give a Temperance lecture. If he had asked me to discover the North Pole in a Gloucester dory, I should have been less astounded ; perhaps less shocked. In vain did I reason that I did not know what a Reform Club was ; that I was not, and never might, could, would, or should be a lecturer, and that a Temperance lecturer was a being so apart from my nature and qualifications that I was better fitted to salt fish upon the wharves than

to assume the position which I was desired to fill. The petitioner was dogged, obstinate, ingenious, and respectful. It seemed the organization which he represented, having heard of the rum-shop services, had appointed a committee to request my presence in the appalling capacity specified, and no for an answer these enthusiasts declined to take.

"I do not lecture," I persisted, "but I will come up to your club-room and help you somehow."

Thus compromising with my fate, I rode up in the vegetable man's carryall to the club-room, and I left it that first evening the firm friend of those struggling men and women, and of all like them, in hard positions and in service like theirs forever.

The little local organization with which I was concerned had, in some respects, an exceptional history, but it belonged to a great class of its kind at that time popular with the mass of our people, and unquestionably useful in stimulating a taste for decent ways of living among that proportion of our fellow-citizens whom the liquor traffic disgraces and ruins. Having become once convinced that the method — however foreign to my taste and to my training — was sound and sensible; was, in fact, so much wiser and greater than my

ignorance or timidity, that it commanded my respect as well as my conscience, of course I had no choice but to give myself to the principle, and try to improve its practice, if I might. As our Methodist friends would say, I "followed the leading," and I never regretted it.

For three years I had the great happiness of serving the people who had needed and selected me. There and then, if ever, I became acquainted with life. I learned more from my Gloucester people than I ever taught them, and I shall hold them gratefully and lovingly in my heart as long as I live.

The pathetic battle of those tempted men with themselves; the hardships of the fishermen, shipped for midwinter voyages; — rum on the wharves and rum on the vessel, mocking the vow of the newly-sobered man; the distrusts and jealousies and obstacles flung in the way of "reformed men" by their own mates, or by respectable citizens who ought to have sunk to their knees with shame for deeds that I have known to be done; and the persistent unpopularity of our efforts, an unpopularity that is known to all movements everywhere in the pursuance of what is called the temperance work, — such things one remembers when the easy side of existence is forgotten.

In the ultimate valuation of life, when soul and body are "put to the question," one may no longer feel concern about the creation of a style, or the verity of a literary school, or the importance of a light touch; one may not recall the brilliant conversers of the choicest society one has known and valued; possibly, even precious passion of study on sheltered winter days by open fires among one's dearest books, and with one's highest masters, may pass: — who can tell?

I think there are things that will not pass, — the look of a manly fellow when he has been sober for two years; the expression in the eyes of his wife, and a word or two she said; the sobs of a man who had "broken his pledge," and begged for his soul's life to be saved (a vulgar incident I grant you! Did I claim that it was "Literature"?); the eyes of the men when they stopped in the middle of an oath upon the wharves, and came in and finished the hymn that we were singing in the club-room; and oh, the way the *women* looked! — these common scenes may last when every other brain-cell but those retaining them and such as they, has given back its impression to the great Engraver.

Touching beyond words were the appeals of the women. One, I remember, walked miles

to my house, — and she was quite unfit for walking, — to beg me, in their superstitious way, to "stop her husband drinking." For I was sometimes accosted on the street by strange men, who would detain me respectfully to say: "I hear when you talk to folks they stop drinkin'; I wish you 'd talk to me!"

This woman pulled up her sleeve and showed me big, purple bruises on her beautiful arm and shoulder. "He 's always kind when he 's sober," she urged, "but I wish you 'd talk to him. He peeked in at the window last night at the club to see you. He said he see you, and you was readin' something out of a book. He said he wanted to go in and listen, but he dassent, for he felt ashamed. So he come home, and throwed himself on the lounge, and put his hands acrosst his eyes and groaned, as if he was hurted in an accident, and he says, —

"'Jane, I wisht I was a better man;' an' I says," —

"'Tom, I wisht you was!' and he says he 'd like to have you talk to him — so I come down. First I thought I 'd go to Mrs. Cæsar Augustus Smith, but he did n't *say* anything about Mrs. Cæsar Augustus Smith — an' so I come to you. For he never hits me when he 's sober, and he likes the baby, and so I thought I 'd come."

Speaking of literature, I remember a bit of pure eloquence, which I heard from one of our men one evening. He was a fine fellow — or was meant to be; a tall, well-looking man, with a good head, and something in it. He drank till he was fifty, then stopped — slipped a few times — but died sober. He had never been a man of many words on matters of religious belief, and was popularly credited with a tinge of awful skepticism. When one day, therefore, he quietly announced to his mates in our little organization his purpose to sympathize with the more religious aspects of its work, the incident created a furore. The man's motives were immediately and bitterly impugned. Few of his neighbors but questioned his sincerity. It would be difficult to make one unfamiliar with just such forms of service among precisely such people, understand the large temporary importance of small events like these.

The next week our "reformed man" rose serenely in the little chapel and said this only: "I understand that my sincerity has been doubted in what I said here last week — that I meant to be a better man, and that I should like to live a different life. I want to say this: If my old neighbors cannot forget my past, I have been *taught to believe that Christ*

can." For clear "persuasion of speech" I have seldom heard that surpassed.

It occurs to me that I have said more of the obstacles than of the aids to our work among the Gloucester drunkards; and far be it from me to fall into that coarseness of heart which is more conscious of the absence than of the presence of human sympathy. It was invigorating to me at the time; and as I look back upon it from this distance, it seems to have been extraordinary that we received so much assistance from sources outside of the boundary of local interest. I used often to be asked to drive down the North Shore and tell the summer people what we were doing for the fishermen. These parlor talks always resulted in something less evasive than pleasant words. Generous and hearty to a surprising degree were the contributions to our always clamorous needs from people to whose tastes and experience our work was quite foreign. Our steadiest help came from a life-long invalid whose noble heart never failed to reply to the suffering of the world from which she was shut in.

It is so easy to doubt the humanity of the easy classes; flings at the hardness of wealth and social position are so common and so often unjust that I am glad to take this chance to testify to the warm hearts, the generous im-

pulses, the lavish purses, and the sincere sympathy which I found only waiting for the opportunity to pour themselves upon a need in whose reality they could trust. The thing which interested me in this especial case was that so much of this practical cordiality came from the people who had the smallest natural amount of sympathy with the religious aspect of what we were doing.

I remember one day, sitting alone in my little study by the harbor, that I heard the tap-tapping of a very small, pointed feminine heel upon the rocks, and that the shadow of a little lady suddenly darkened the door. I knew her at a glance for one of the queens of that phase of society which we still call fashionable. She was, in fact, a very gay little lady — and remains so. She came in quite soberly and gently, and began to talk with me about the Gloucester fishermen, asking the most appreciative and intelligent questions; I wondered at them. Her boys, she said, wanted to put a set of standard novels in the library of our club-room. When she went away she left substantial evidence of — what was it? A moment's sympathy? An hour's genuineness? A movement of regret, or of resolve? Who can say? Perhaps this gay benefactress was doing a bit of penance of her own? It is possible.

THE HOUSE AT GLOUCESTER

Did I feel at liberty to use her name, a large portion of the gay world would appreciate the incident. But, for myself, whenever I hear this little lady, as one sometimes does, criticised for her merry-making at life, I recall that afternoon at Gloucester. I hear the tapping of the tiny heels upon my rocks. I see the sober face, chastened with a look never seen in the drawing-rooms, where she rules it whimsically and royally. I hear an accent of something like perplexity, like wonder, like appeal, like reverence in her elaborate voice, — and I am silent; for my thoughts of her are kind, "long thoughts."

To this little group of puzzled and tempted people, for whom my heart was full, at my audacious request, came Phillips Brooks. Indeed, he came not once, but twice, in the busiest part of his year, and preached to us; once in September — and again, I think, in March. I know that the Indian summer was on the harbor at the time of his first visit, and that the snow lay heavily upon the narrow streets when he came again.

Take it altogether, this is the pleasantest memory which I have of the great preacher. He lent himself to those little people with luxurious heartiness. He had that gracious way of conferring a favor, as if he were its

recipient. In fact, he seemed to enjoy the two sermons preached to that handful of fishermen — outside of his own church connections, outside of the trend of his own work, and perhaps a little strange to his experience of audiences — as much as any which I ever heard from his lips.

Of course our people were touched with the honor which he did them; and they thronged the hall, or audience room. The wharves and the streets and the fleets poured out a mighty delegation; Trinity Church never gave him more devout attention. It was a beautiful sight.

Now, one thing I noticed. In the course of his two sermons given to those drunkards and fishermen, the preacher alluded to the object for which we were united but a single time. Then he said: "There are men who give up the beautiful possibilities of life to low sins, and — *drunkenness*." He drew himself to his superb height, and brought out that one word with an accent of glorious scorn. The tempted men lowered their eyes before it. It scathed them harder than hours of denunciation, and moved them more than pages of appeal.

XI

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL: "SHUT IN:" A ROSE GARDEN IN CAROLINA

Distinctly, in fact almost entirely with Gloucester, I find interwoven my recollections of the poet, Edward Rowland Sill — a man of exquisite performance, and of superior promise in American letters; still a young man — too soon overtaken by death.

He happened on Eastern Point one summer, or opening autumn, like a bird on the wing from some foreign land. In truth, there was always, to my fancy, something bird-like about him. He had that shy eye, that essential reticence united with apparent frankness, that air of a form of creation finer than ours and competent to be critical of us accordingly; yet, from very fineness pathetically depended upon our sympathy.

He had, at the time I knew him, printed but one thin book, I think — a booklet, he called it. It has, since his death, been republished. The best thing he ever wrote was "The Fool's Prayer." Or perhaps I should hesitate between

that and his beautiful poem written for Smith College ; that containing the well-known lines :

> "Were women wise, and men all true —
> And one thing more that may not be,
> Old earth were fair enough for me."

He and Mrs. Sill occupied a cottage near me, for a few weeks, and it was my good fortune to know something of them in the freedom from constraint which belongs to summer seashore neighborhoods, — especially, I sometimes think, to Gloucester neighborhood.

I had known the poet for some time by correspondence only ; he was a wonderful letter-writer. Real literary correspondence — in fact, correspondence of any kind — is a lost art in our scurrying day ; and I found his letters pungently stimulating through one long, secluded Andover winter. I only understood how valuable they were when they ceased forever. A certain quaintness in the man used to show itself in the shapes and styles of his letters. I remember receiving quite a number written upon long narrow coils of white paper ; I never decided whether they were the tapes such as the telegrams of an olden time used to be inscribed upon, and such as stock brokers still use, or whether they were the foldings from his wife's ribbons. This is the only instance in which I ever received letters by the yard.

I had never seen him, as I say, and I well remember his shy appearance at my cottage. He seemed to shrink unaccountably from the first meeting. "We have an ideal of a person from writing," he said. Whether he feared to lose his of me, or mine of him, he did not divulge; and I did not dare to ask. He was, in most respects, one of the most finely-strung human beings whom I have ever known. How easily most of us brush off our ideals! His were the realities of life, to him.

He and Mrs. Sill were enthusiastic walkers; and gave much of their time to wandering over the Gloucester downs. I could not join in this pleasure; and my talks with him were fragmentary, but always rich and nutritive. He did not chat; he conversed. A talkative feminine fellow-boarder he named, I remember, The Jabberwock. Mr. Sill was charmed with Gloucester. He had the Wonson cottage, with the beautiful lava gorge in front, where the tide rises almost to the piazza; and his favorite way of spending an evening was to go out and sit on the rocks in the dark, and swing his feet off. He liked to hang them over the water, he said.

The same moral refinement which marks his poems characterized the man. His personal unselfishness was of a very high order. To

sacrifice himself for the comfort of others was as natural to him as true metre. It was impossible to be in his company a week and not make some discovery in the science of kindness. This is not always preëminently true of the critical temperament; and his was distinctly that. He should have ranked with the foremost of our American critics, if he had given himself to that form of literary expression. I always perceived that he had the right of nature as well as of training, to sit in the courts of judgment. His loss has been obvious in this respect. His experience as professor of English had made him an invaluable literary friend; for it added patience to power.

On the morning that he was to leave Gloucester for his home in Ohio, Mrs. Sill came running to our cottage for help. Mr. Sill had met with an accident, more serious than it was thought at the time, and had fainted. He remained where he was for some days before being able to move; then pluckily continued his journey. I went with them as far as Boston, where they parted from me; and I never saw him again. He died that winter.

I do not think that the loss to our literature, in missing the full blossom of his powers, has ever been fitly estimated. A few knew, and

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL

know what his value was and would have become. A man so sensitively balanced is always at a painful disadvantage in our calling. He is incapable of urging himself, and too easily swerved from the expostulation of competition.

A well-known editor once wrote to him, carelessly, of a certain contribution which had the appearance of being less popular than others: "The people are fickle. They want some new thing all the time. It is 'good-by' to you to-day, and welcome somebody else to-morrow!" Another man might have taken these thoughtless words as lightly as they were given. Mr. Sill was with difficulty persuaded to write again for that magazine. Our editors might learn a lesson from an incident like this; they deal "not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers," of select nature; they do well to take even a little troublesome care where they strike, and how. I happen to know that, in this instance, the contributor was held in high honor by the editor; but it was almost impossible, afterwards, to make the poet believe it.

It was the same in the last great ordeal. He died under conditions from which a coarser man would have easily rallied. "We did not suppose," was the stupefied cry, "we did not

know the patient had such an organization as this!"

Fortunately for human happiness, perhaps, such exquisitely ordered natures are so few that the dull, blundering average of us does not know how to treat them. We inflict when we thought to play, and kill where we meant to heal. When it is too late — "We did not suppose," we plead. "Other organizations are not like this!" Of course not. Why should they be? How could they be?

The pages of the Gloucester story turn fast now, and yet I write on, because I shrink from the abrupt termination of that beautiful chapter of my life which dealt with those whom I still find it impossible not to call "my people." Time and trouble, illness and death, change and chance, have scattered them far; and yet, to me, they always seem to be a little group, affectionate and wistful, waiting for me in the old club-room, and softly singing, "I need Thee every hour" — their chosen hymn and mine — as I come in.

I had been writing "The Story of Avis" during this overwrought time of personal preoccupation at Gloucester. That book came from near my heart, and tore it, perhaps, accordingly. I wrote chiefly in the winters, at Andover, and revised at Gloucester. That

last summer, I remember, was pushed with the proof-sheets of this book, crowding in between the needs of my people. Many a morning's work was interrupted by the visits of the "reformed men;" or by the little dissensions and troubles of their club organization; or by signs of the coldness or opposition of those who might have aided us, and who would have done so — I like to believe — if they had ever understood our aims and motives. If there be one lesson above another which experience in moral reforms teaches a fair-minded person, I think it is patience with the averseness of those who do not join in our own particular methods of improving the world. Lack of sympathy with these is quite as likely to signify want of head as want of heart; or simply to indicate a deficient imagination, or one strung below its key.

My own observation leads me to believe that when one has discovered for one's self this profound but subtle truth, one is just about ready to begin to enter upon a course or career of practical beneficence. As a rule, one is far on in such before one makes this discovery. For myself, the enforced end of my work at Gloucester and that illumination which would have made it so much easier and gentler to the enduring nerves, came together. As I

say, "The Story of Avis" may have had its share in the sudden surrender of strength, which for a long time put an end to my use of my pen, and to all my hopes and visions of any personal part in alleviating the lot of the tempted men and suffering women of my seaport home.

One evening in September, at the end of a worried summer, I came home from a service at the club-room with a strange lightness at the head. The moonlight on the harbor had a look which it never wore before or since; an expression remote, as familiar scenery may appear, we think, to those about to leave the world forever. In that thrilling harbor-light, everything that one was doing or caring about took on a small look. Service for humanity itself acquired a vague value, and the fever of soul and body which fed it turned again and rent me.

I sank on my pillow, faintly wishing that I need never leave it again, but perfectly aware that I should get up and go on at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, as usual. Till dawn I watched the harbor throbbing under full moon and full tide. That night the watcher did not sleep; nor the next; nor the next. I closed my house suddenly, and fled to my father's home; where, except in the great, uncontrol-

lable crises of life, rest had always awaited me. This was no uncontrollable crisis; nor even a crisis at all, that I could see; and I "crawled in," as the grown child does, under a father's roof, confident of peace and healing. Neither came. The next night and the next passed like the others; and then the rack of habitual insomnia closed in.

One slips into the door of the torture chamber, thinking it to be the entrance to some commonplace apartment, perhaps some pleasant room with broad views and easy exit. One turns to step out, on some natural errand — then, behold the bars, the bolts, the locks. Escape? Try the windows. They seem to hang a million feet above the solid earth; their grating is of metal never known before to the prisoner's chemistry, a relentless fibre, made from the pillars of the world. Weep if you will; pray, if you choose. But "God shut the door." You will stay there till He opens it.

It is not my purpose to turn even one chapter of these recollections into an invalid's diary. Up to this point I have refrained from a subject always of so much more importance to the sufferer than to his friends, that one's preference would exile it from these records

altogether. Since that is not quite practicable, it seems to me the simpler way to meet it as frankly and as briefly as possible.

Perhaps we all have some plea more reasonable than others, to account for the absence of the things which we have failed to be or to do. It has always seemed to me that the views taken by persons capable of "the vision and the dream," of the grounds on which they have omitted to reach their ideal, would have an interest far above that of mere biographic personalities. What warning in this experience of wasted aspiration! What stimulus in that! But here we come to the question: Is aspiration ever wasted? Is achievement, or the effort to achieve, the essence of value? When Sidney Colvin, Stevenson's particular critic, condemned "The Ebb-Tide," — to my mind one of the best things which Stevenson ever did, — the exiled and sinking man wrote pathetically: —

"The inherent tragedy of things works itself out from white to black and blacker, and the poor things of a day look ruefully on. Does it shake my cast-iron faith? I cannot say it does. I believe in the ultimate decency of things; ay, and if I woke in hell, should still believe it! But it is hard walking! . . .

(Observe the cruelty — give me a parenthe-

sis to say it : — This comfortable Englishman, tasting the fruits of the world, pouring what he called "criticism" on a dying man, prisoner in an island in the South Sea, where the mails come but once a month, and where a poor fellow might be buried before he could know that his book sold, or his critics repented them of their sins! Facts like this deepen a natural skepticism as to the usefulness of the art of criticism into a fierce pang of resentment for the dying author's sake.)

"I am an idler and a cumberer of the ground," he writes in one of the last letters to which he set his trembling pen. "It may be excused to me, perhaps, by twenty years of industry and ill health, which have taken the cream off the milk. . . . I am almost ready to call the world an error. Because? Because I have not drugged myself with successful work, and there are all kinds of . . . unfriendly trifles buzzing in my ear. If I could find a place where I could lie down and give up for (say) two years, and allow the sainted public to support me, if it were a lunatic asylum, would n't I go, just! . . . But you men with salaries don't know how a family weighs on a fellow's mind."

Stevenson is our latest and most pathetic specimen of the not inconsiderable list of inva-

lid writers who have been important to the world; and if the rest of them had "spoken out" as bluntly, as quaintly, and as wistfully as he, we might all have been the wiser or the gentler for their candor; at least, all but those critics who appropriate wisdom and scorn gentleness, and who will doubtless perceive in these very outcries of genius and of dissolution, wailing over from Samoa, a fault of syntax, or an error in taste, or some pathological inefficiency, to be picked up and sported on the point of an easy pen. The solemn, antique writhing of power overcome by fate, the great attitude, like that of the Laocoön, the grandeur of strength rending its own weakness, the long, touching conflict of spirit with flesh, the massive determination crowding down physical disorder which would have killed a lesser creature twenty times over, twenty years before — who is to rate all this in an estimate of the man's value to literature? No one; absolutely no one who has not fought the lions of physical disease in the cage of a life bolted by the sharp need of daily bread; no one who has not fought them with the sinew and the nerve of a creative genius.

An invalid or disabled writer does not ask for the sops and gruels of the sick-room; he does not expect his metre to be scanned by

his headaches, or his perspicacity to be taken by the physician's thermometer. He is the last man toiling and suffering, to appeal to the stethoscope against his rhetoric or his construction. He asks nothing but fair play, and that fair sense which is the basis of fair play. In a word, he ought to be judged by the presence of a certain quality which suffering only gives, as well as by the absence of certain other qualities which are the properties of health alone. It is precisely this discrimination which is too often lacking in comfortable folk sitting easily on critics' salaries and dictating through nerves cooled by the critical, not fevered by the creative, faculty.

"I have a brave soul in a coward body," said one of our poets when he fainted under a painful accident. How is a champion football player to understand that?

Wise was Hazlitt, who wrote of "The insolence of health." Rose Terry Cooke's physician said to her a few years before she died, "Every time you write you draw out of the very sources of your life."

"No truly sensitive man," said Longfellow once to me, "can be perfectly well." He might have added that one of the cruelest problems of life is to make the perfectly well understand that he is not perfectly sensitive,

and therefore may be disqualified from comprehension of those who are.

Far be it from me — to the farthest limit of good sense — to seem to undervalue by a semitone the supremacy of physical sanity. Next to holiness, nothing is so enviable as health. I am not ashamed to say it — I would rather be well than be Shakespeare. I would rather be a hearty, happy, strapping motor-man, or wood-chopper, or stoker, than — But would I? How can one tell? "To understand the psychology of sheep," said George Eliot, "one must have been a sheep." To understand the mental attitude of health, one must have been descended of health and chosen of it. Ideally speaking, the robust mind in the robust body *ought* to be the keenest as well as the finest in this world. In point of fact, it often partakes too much of its own muscle; the nerve of perception is bedded a little too deep in the fibre.

A life-long invalid, herself a brave, patient, unselfish woman, absorbed in interests outside of her own suffering, and more useful to the world than most healthy people, said to me the wisest thing which I ever heard upon the subject, — "The sick and the well do not understand each other." There is philosophy in this, which is worth heeding. It has oc-

curred to me that a mediator is needed between health and disease, as there was between heaven and earth, as there is between virtue and vice, and certain other separated quantities or qualities. The physician does not fill this function, nor can he; the reasons why he may not, are obvious. Most great human needs create their own supplies; and this one may come, as soon as consciousness of its want reaches the stage of articulation, or, possibly, of clamor.

Life, I believe, teaches most of us some one lesson supremely above all others. The literary artist will make over to the world that illumination which fate has kindled to the fairest flame in his own soul. He may "sketch" or "etch," he may "report" or "photograph," he may be realist or romanticist, he may have the light touch or the strong one — but he will portray what he knows, and little else. Imagination is built upon knowledge, and his dreams will rest upon his facts. He is worth to the world just about what he has learned from it, and no more.

I have sometimes thought that, before I put the shield on my stylographic pen for the last time, I should like to say to that little portion of the world which knows or cares for me at all, such things as I have discovered for my-

self about the relation of illness to energy, to sympathy, and to fortitude. Some of them seem to me worth saying — though I may be wrong ; and even worth suffering to be qualified to say — though on that I do not insist. But when one reflects on the books one never has written, and never may, though their schedules lie in the beautiful chirography which marks the inception of an unexpressed thought upon the pages of one's notebook, one is aware, of any given idea, that the chances are against its ever being offered to one's dearest readers.

Therefore, though this is clearly not the space for a treatise on invalidism (Shade of Harriet Martineau forbid ! She did it too well in a volume for one to do it worse in a page), yet I may be pardoned, if I venture to say : —

The world has learned fast how to treat the other defective classes, the criminal, the insane, the shiftless, the pauper ; in all these branches of investigation we are developing a race of experts.

In the comprehension of the physically disabled, or disordered, it is my conviction that we are behind our age. I do not mean by this to cast any petty or ungrateful fling upon the usefulness of physicians.

As a class, I think them men and women of courage and of unselfishness far beyond the

line at which most of us exhibit these qualities. But the scalpel will never perform the finer surgery, nor the prescription formulate the hidden therapeutics that I have in mind. The pyschology of sickness and of health are at odds; and both the sick and the well suffer from the fact. I believe that great pathological reformations are before us, and that a mass of human misery, now beyond the reach of the kindest patience which handles it, will be alleviated. In truth, I believe that sympathy as a fine art is backward in the growth of progress; and that the subtlest and most delicate minds of the earth will yet give themselves to its study with a high passion hitherto unknown to us.

In the days of the Most Holy Catholic Inquisition, one form of torture, above all others conceived of the devil, was held in supreme value. This was the torture of enforced sleeplessness. About three to four days and nights of this religious argument were found enough to bring the most obstinate heretic to terms. Where fire and pincers, rack and famine failed, the denial of sleep succeeded.

De Quincey's Opium-Eater was a prose poem, which stands for all time one of the greatest pathological contributions of genius and of suffering to literature. There is a vision yet

to be recorded — whether in prose or in poetry, in fiction or in philosophy, I sometimes wonder — which shall disclose the action of another drama, not of splendors and horrors, like his who heard the immortal cry, "Everlasting farewells!" in his ruined dreams; but the drama of endurance, resolve, and conquest, which goes on unrecognized in so many a brave and patient, obscure life.

The abstainer from anodynes who starves for sleep, but does not feed on poison (God forbid that you dare to blame him if he does, though you may safely revere him if he does not!), lacks the gorgeous, narcotined imagination of the great Englishman whereby to tell his story; but if it is ever told, it will be a better one for the world to hear.

There is a light side to most of our grim experiences, and I am glad to record mine in this direction.

Acquaintance with insomnia is like acquaintance with grief. When you have learned how to treat your strange foe, he has half ceased to be your foe. Unexpected docilities and amities develop. Where you looked for a battle to the death, you find a truce; and behold, you live.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say, out of a measure of personal relief from past miseries, that I have learned many things which I may

reveal in that day when the writer and the unknown reader who loves her best shall commune together. (I wonder if other authors have the fancy which I have, that such a gracious being exists?) Without waiting for that phantasmagorial appointment, it may be worth while here to suggest to other victims of our overwrought American constitution and overbearing climate these two thoughts; — for truth I know, of my faith, is in them.

Avoid dependence upon narcotics as you would that circle in the Inferno where the winds blow the lost spirit about, and toss him to and fro — returning on his course, and driven back — forever. Take the amount of sleep that God allows you, and go without what He denies; but fly from drugs as you would from that poison of the Borgias which cunningly selected the integrity of the brain on which to feed. Starve for sleep if you must; die for lack of it if you must; I am almost prepared to say, accept the delirium which marks the extremity of fate in this land of despair, — but scorn the habit of using anodynes as you hope for healing, and value reason. This revelation is sealed with seven seals.

Expect to recover. Sleep is a habit. The habit of not sleeping once diverged, may at

any time swerve back to the habit of rest. The nervous nature is peculiarly hung upon the Law of Rhythm ; and the oscillation, having vibrated just about so far, is liable or likely to swing back. But, if you are to recover, the chances are that you must do it in your own way, not in other people's ways. To a certain extent, respect your own judgment, if you have any, as to the necessities of your condition.

Cease to trouble yourself whether you are understood or sympathized with, by your friends, or even by your physicians. Probably you never will be, because you never can be. At all events, it is of the smallest importance whether you are or not. The expression of sympathy is the first luxury which the sick should learn to go without. This is peculiarly and always true of nervous disorder. A toothache or an influenza, a cough or a colic, calls forth more commiseration than these trifles deserve. Disease of the nervous system is, as a rule, and among enlightened and kindly people, regarded with the instinctive suspicion and coldness natural to a profound ignorance of the subject. Do not be afraid to act for yourself. Define your own conditions of cure. Follow them faithfully. Do not be impatient to be as you were before the liberty of healthy

nerves departed from you. It may become needful for you to readjust your life, and all that is therein.

Obey the laws which you have discovered for yourself to be good government for you; and probably, by respecting them, you will regain yourself, and receive once more the natural renovation of your soul and body. Common, human sleep, once indifferently accepted, like light, or air, or food, will then become the ecstasy of living. With it, all hardships can be borne; without it, none.

Guy de Maupassant, in his piteous condition at the last, chased, we are told, imaginary butterflies. "Where," he cried, "are my lost thoughts? Who will tell me where to find my thoughts?" Then, he beheld them — blue for love, and silver for joy, and black for sorrow — winged creatures, flitting from his grasp, and returning to his hand.

So, I like to think, it will be with all of us who have ever had any thoughts to chase and who, through the physical disabilities of life, or any of its apparent refusals, have missed certain of our own best possibilities. Our butterflies will all dip on before, and circle round us — the blue and the silver, the rose and the gold — wings of what we might have done, and yet may do. For winged things know

their course through space ; and life and death alike, I think, are flowers to them.

"Tragic Gloucester," a friend once called it, who resented the effect upon myself of the troubled side of seaport life. But beautiful Gloucester, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, it remains to me. Her tides may tell the saddest stories to those who have ears to hear them ; but, like many other sad raconteurs, they tell the sweetest, too.

The autumn of 1888 brushed the palette of Gloucester Harbor. The face of the leaf and the tint of the lining of the wave took on their own strong colors. The October storms and the October suns, equally welcome to those who love the sea, changed places like figures in a graceful walking-dance ; and the first delicate sheath of ice upon the top of the hogshead of rainwater which had always been my thermometer at the châlet, and told me when it was time to go back to my father's house, called me to Andover Hill no more.

The Old Maids' Paradise was closed that year forever.

Mr. Alger, in his "Friendships of Women," prudently observes : "A man's best friend is a wife of good sense and good heart, whom he loves, and who loves him." We might well

say: A woman's best friend is a husband of intellect and of heart, whom she loves, and who loves her. And I should like to add: A literary woman's best critic is her husband; and I cannot express in these few words the debt which I am proud to acknowledge to him who has never hindered my life's work by one hour of anything less than loyal delight in it, and who has never failed to urge me to my best, of which his ideal is higher than my own.

The great semi-tropical region of the Southern States has many a choice spot hidden away from the glance of the fashionable tourist, who cares to do only what his neighbor does; and he whose eyes are fine discovers these winter gardens, and shelters himself in them till they, too, come into the fashion, and are ruined accordingly. Among these luxuriant Edens in 1888 was the village of Summerville, South Carolina. It was, and is, to my mind — and I know something of the South — one of the very best places upon the map below Washington in which a Northerner may take his turn at the fancy of losing the winter out of his year. Most of us try it, and most of us get over it; and we of New England, in particular, return to our own country by another way, and forthwith develop a respect for

it never known before we exchanged the snow-drift for the sand-flats, the Northeaster for the soft, weak, stationary thermometer, and the coast pines for the everglades. "An orange tree is a stick beside an apple-orchard!" cried one homesick Massachusetts invalid, exiled for dear life to Florida. Though I confess to something of the same prejudice, I must admit that Summerville is a land of lovely dreams, with more conveniences and fewer discomforts, more tonic and less enervation, than any other Southern health or pleasure resort that I have seen.

Summerville is a village dropped into a pine forest. Roses run riot over it; its homes are gardens, and gardens are its homes. There the winds are laid; a blind may hang loosely half the winter, and will never flap from dark to dawn against your rose-wreathed window. If there is wind enough to blow a little girl's hat off, one calls it a gale. There it is always dreamland, and there the knotted Northern nerves may relax and rest.

The winter of 1888–89 found us in this kindly place. Longfellow wrote once to a friend of his early home life, "We are happy in our own hired house." Our "hired house" was one of the prettiest, I make bold to believe, upon which the American traveler might happen,

though he sought from Maryland to Florida. The cottage was set in a bower of roses, the Cherokee, the blush, and the yellow. Japonicas, azaleas, violets, and magnolias blazed across box and myrtle, touched in with the soft lights of Southern garden blossoms whose names I did not know, and never had the intellectual initiative to ask, since, to tell the truth, I liked them the better for my ignorance. I have never seen at the North anything to compare with the feeling of the Charleston people (who made their summer homes in this village) for their flowers. This passion was identical with devotion, which is not true of all passions, and easily mounted into adoration. The chief conversation in Summerville was of flowers ; and a gentle, refining one it was.

To this cottage, where we sat among the roses, hard at work (for I have never seen the time yet when I could manage to take a vacation not absolutely thrust upon me by illness), came down one day the indefatigable editor of a New York literary syndicate, to whom distance is a myth, and topography a plaything.

From that visit resulted the syndicate publication, and later, the appearance in book form of the two novels which Mr. Ward and I

collaborated, and about which I have a few words to say here.

We were engaged to write these novels for a special purpose, and with a special cast and coloring. These, like most of the novels written in the present day, were to be adapted to serial publication first and foremost ; which means, in a word, rapidity of action and sensitiveness of suspense, and more frequent climax than were required by stories of the elder time, peacefully read between covers, of an evening. The one thing which serial publication does *not* require is less art. Personally, I have always found it more difficult than a tale which has no bars or fences, but may run its own will over the countryside, coming to a stop when it gets through. Partly for this reason, but more because of my own inaptitude for historical study, I was very reluctant to undertake the work in question. Mr. McClure, who recognized my husband's gifts in this direction, persuaded us ; and we wrote.

Our task was to create two novels built upon Scriptural characters, scenery, and history. They must be oriental to the last adjective. They must treat of life, of love, of action, not as the occidental looks at these great facts. Saints, villains, heroes, and heroines must think and feel not as the New Yorker, or the Bos-

tonian, or the Londoner of 1890 thinks and feels, but as the Babylonian or the Jew of two thousand or three thousand years ago would have loved and fought and wrought and died. This undertaking involved much study, and of a close and exacting kind. And just here, I would like to say: —

The research implied in the construction of these two books must be entirely credited to my collaborateur. I cannot lay claim to any portion whatever of the industry and accuracy which have received the warm recognition of oriental scholars; and I have always felt a little uncomfortable at the chance of being supposed to be so much "wiser than I am!"

Further: One of these books, from the critic's point of view, succeeded better than the other. I am glad to take this natural opportunity to say, that the one which succeeded should be entirely attributed to Mr. Ward — construction, plot, and all but a small fraction of the execution.

"The Master of the Magicians" added to a large circulation the cordial welcome of reviewers. For whatever that is worth, the book had it.

"Come Forth" reached the usual comfortable and satisfactory circulation, but did not leap to the further side of that; and — I am

told — received at the hands of reviewers a treatment amounting to brutality. Of course, in this case, as is my custom in all others, I have never read these opinions expressed by professional critics about my books, and have never felt any temptation to do so.

It fell to Mr. Ward and myself to collaborate one other story, growing out of our life in South Carolina; and the success of this (which was so fortunate as to take a first prize in the "Youth's Companion," in the only competition of that kind in which I ever engaged,) I attribute also, in good measure, to my collaborateur.

XII

ART FOR TRUTH'S SAKE: STORIES AND BOOKS: A NEW HOME

A MAKER of books with any tendency towards the activities of moral reform may be at some peculiar disadvantage. As I look back upon the last twenty-five years of my own life, I seem to myself to have achieved little or nothing in the stir of the great movements for improving the condition of society which have distinguished our day; yet I am conscious that these have often thrust in my study door and dragged me out into their forays, if not upon their battle-fields. The grandfather who belonged to the underground-railway, and the grandfather of the German lexicon, must have contended in the brain cells or heart cells of their unconscious descendant, as our ancestors do in the lives of all of us; for the reformer's blood and the student's blood have always had an uncomfortable time of it, together, in my veins.

It is almost impossible to understand, now,

what it meant when I was twenty-five, for a young lady reared as I was, on Andover Hill, to announce that she should forthwith approve and further the enfranchisement and elevation of her own sex. Seen beside the really great martyrdoms and dedications of the "causes" which throb through our modern life, this seems an episode only large enough to irritate a smile. Yet I do not, to this hour, like to recall, and I have no intention whatever of revealing, what it cost me.

In fact, it seems to have been my luck to stumble into various forms of progress, to which I have been of the smallest possible use; yet for whose sake I have suffered the discomfort attending all action in moral improvements, without the happiness of knowing that this was clearly quite worth while.

The creed is short, though it has taken a long time to formulate it.

I believe in the Life Everlasting; which is sure to be; and that it is the first duty of Christian faith to present that life in a form more attractive to the majority of men than the life that now is.

I believe in women; and in their right to their own best possibilities in every department of life.

I believe that the methods of dress practiced

among women are a marked hindrance to the realization of these possibilities, and should be scorned or persuaded out of society.

I believe that the miseries consequent on the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors are so great as imperiously to command the attention of all dedicated lives ; and that while the abolition of American slavery was numerically first, the abolition of the liquor traffic is not morally second.

I believe that the urgent protest against vivisection which marks our immediate day, and the whole plea for lessening the miseries of animals as endured at the hands of men, constitute the "next" great moral question, which is to be put to the intelligent conscience, and that only the educated conscience can properly reply to it.

I believe that the condition of our common and statute laws is behind our age to an extent unperceived by all but a few of our social reformers ; that wrongs mediæval in character, and practically resulting in great abuses, and much unrecorded suffering are still to be found at the doors of our legal system ; and that they will remain there till the fated fanatic of this undeveloped "cause" arises to demolish them.

I am uncertain whether I ought to add that

I believe in the homeopathic system of therapeutics. I am often told by skeptical friends that I hold this belief on a par with the Christian religion; and am not altogether inclined to deny the sardonic impeachment! When our bodies cease to be drugged into disease and sin, it is my personal impression that our souls will begin to stand a fair chance; perhaps not much before.

Too brief a creed! Yet still too short a life to practice it! But may the clover refuse to grow over my grave, and the flowers laid there by the dearest hands shrink from it, if I outlive the impulse of my heart to keep step with the onward movement of human life, and to perceive the battle afar off, charging when and where I can.

Justice Holmes, the son of our great poet, in a recent Decoration Day address struck a pæan in praise of the "splendid carelessness of life" which war taught us. Give us such splendid carelessness, in moral as in physical danger, and the world will spin fast towards the stars.

I have intimated that the claims of my study have interfered with the demands which social reform would otherwise have made upon my life. This is an evitable fact, imperfectly to be understood, except by people whose busi-

ness is to stay in a study. There is a puzzled expression sometimes cast upon one by men and women — but especially by women — whom one holds in the highest honor ; whose own existence is dedicated to the moral agitation of the platform and the convention and to the machinery of organization. Mine is not, nor has it ever been. My intellect may go with them, and my heart may throb for them, but my time and vitality have always been distinctly the property of my ideals of literary art ; ideals which are not the less imperious to me, because I know better than any of my critics how impossible it has been for me to reach them, where they —

> "Swing like lamps in the Judgment Hall
> On the Eve of the Day of the Last Awaking."

"Do not trouble her. She works in another way from ours," said Mrs. Livermore gently, one day, to some unknown agitator, who was abusing rather than entreating me into the performance of some platform exhibition for the sake of the cause. I blessed the great woman who defended me from the small one ; and I think of her words and manner gratefully, to this day. And this leads me to say, by the way, if I may spare a paragraph for the confession : — that it is fortunate for the real usefulness and power of women in public ad-

dress, that their eminent success in this direction has never in the least depended upon my individual contributions to its history.

In the course of my life I have made, indeed, the most conscientious and courageous efforts to defy my own temperament in this respect. I have read, and preached, and lectured; possibly I may have martyred myself in this manner fifteen or twenty times. The kindest of audiences and my full quota of encouragement have not, and has not, been able to supply me with the pluck required to add visibly to this number of public appearances. Before an audience I am an abject coward, and have at last concluded to admit the humiliating fact. The solid amount of suffering which I have endured on such occasions, is as disproportionate as it is ridiculous. Once I was rash enough to pledge myself to deliver a short course of literary lectures before a coeducational university, where I was sure of that admiring and uncritical sympathy which young students give to a teacher to whom, for any reason, they feel at all drawn.

For six disastrous weeks before this simple experience, I dwindled with terror, day and night; and I came to that audience of boys and girls as if they had been a den of tigers, and I a solitary, disabled gladiator, doomed at

their claws. I contrived to live to the end of that "course of lectures," hiding my agonies with such hypocritical dissimulation that I was told their existence was not suspected by my audience. Whether the students were any wiser for that literary instruction I do not know; but I was. The inevitable miseries of life are enough, I said. I will never ornament them with the superfluous again. To the lecture bureaus and the charity entertainments of our elocutionary land, I have since that occasion offered one monotonous reply: I am not a platform woman. Go thou in peace, but I pray thee, have me excused.

Dr. Bushnell's strong and vicious phrase, The Reform against Nature, which is so often misapplied in opposition to the higher interests of women, sometimes finds its fit survival; and I meekly suggest this as one of the contingencies which it seems created to cover. I glory in the success of a modest and high-minded woman in public address. I am proud of her to the last shrinking nerve in my own organization. She seems to me something phenomenal, to be admired in silent awe. But this is a reform against *my* nature; and I have retreated from the field.

I have said (to return to our interrupted

thought) that the duties of a student and writer have often encroached upon my power to throw my life into moral reforms: but I am anxious to add that my interest in moral reforms has never, to my consciousness, encroached upon my power — such as that has been — to write; or upon those habits of study which are the key to the combination lock of all successful writing.

On the contrary, I am distinctly aware that such sympathies with the moral agitations of our day as have touched me at all, have fed, not famished my literary work. I think that most writers who have trodden a similar path would say as much; but there is more involved in such testimony than would seem at first sight: let me suspend the thought, however, while I allow myself a moment of more purely personal musing.

Upon reviewing the list of books which my long-suffering publishers of the eminent and friendly house which has borne with me for thirty years attribute to my pen, I find in the whole of it but one which is confessedly and componently written to further an ethical reform. This is a little pamphlet on the dress of women. It is nothing more or less than a tract; and never claimed to be. A tract, though it spoke with the rhetoric of men, of

artists, or of angels, and though it had compassed the circulation of a yellow novel or a spelling-book, is, in no sense, literature, nor even literary art; nor ever claims to be. No artist or artisan of the school of Art for Art's sake can be more acutely aware of axioms like these than his fellow-student who, from a diametrically opposite conception of the nature and province of literature, dips his pen now and then into the hot blood of some battle with skulking error, which preachers and philanthropists and men of science have passed by upon the other side, and left for the teller of tales or the singer of song to trouble himself wherewith.

If I am reminded how many of my stories have been written with an ethical purpose, that is quite another accusation, and one which I have not, from any point of view, the wraith of a wish to deny.

I have been particularly asked, in closing these papers, to say a few words about my own theory of literary art. However unimportant one's personal fraction of achievement may be, it is built upon theory of some kind; and the theory may be considered of as much or as little interest or value as the work achieved.

"I have never gone — I do not go — so deep as that," said one of our foremost novelists to

me, many years ago, when I asked him why he did not handle some situation which had presented itself to me as peculiarly adapted to his strong and delicate pen. But he spoke gravely, and too thoughtfully for the lightness of his words. I was not surprised when, long afterwards, I noticed that he had become absorbed in some of the most serious of sociological questions, and that a book of his no longer held itself in graceful scorn apart from the study of the higher and the deeper laws which govern human life. But that phrase of his stayed by me. He would not go "so deep as that"? Yet this was no inditer of society verse, no builder of uproarious paragraphs, no dabbler in comedy, whose profession it was to make a man laugh after dinner, or a woman smile when she had sat down to cry. (Heaven preserve the lightsome race, for we need them when we can spare the tragic artist!) He of whom I speak was an artist in fiction; of dignity, versatility, and fame.

What manner of artist was he, I make bold to ask, who would not "go as deep as that?" Graceful, elaborate, subtle, ingenious, charming, he may be. Perfect, I suggest, he is not, and he cannot be; no, nor even complete in the artistic sense of the term, who refuses to portray life exactly as it is.

In a word, I believe it to be the province of the literary artist to tell the truth about the world he lives in, and I suggest that, in so far as he fails to be an accurate truth-teller, he fails to be an artist. Now there is something obviously very familiar about this simple proposition; and, turning to trace the recognition down, one is amused to perceive that here is almost the precise language of the school of writers to which one distinctly does not belong. Truth, like climate, is common property; and I venture to suggest that the issue between the two contending schools of literary art to-day is not so much one of fact as of form; or, perhaps I should rather say, not so much one of theory as of temperament in the expression of theory.

A literary artist portrays life as it is, or has been, as it might be, or as it should be. We classify him as the realist, the romanticist, or the idealist; though I am not sure but our classification is more defective than his ability to meet it. Separate, for instance, the first of these clauses from the formulation. Let us say, it is the duty of the artist in fiction to-day to paint life as it exists. With this inevitable observation who of us has any quarrel?

The quarrel arises when the artist defines his subject, and chooses his medium. The

conflict begins when the artist proffers his personal impression as to what life is. "Your work," said Hall Caine before the Century Club, "is what you are." Just here, I venture to suggest, lies the only important, uncontested field left in a too familiar war. Most of the controversy between our schools of art goes "firing wild," because it fails to perceive the true relations of this one simple feature of resistance.

We are all agreed, I submit, that we should picture life as it is. If I may return to the definite words, — our difference is not so much one of artistic theory as of the personal equation. Our book reveals what life is to us. Life is to us what we are.

Mr. Howells, in his charming papers on literary Boston, has given us some of the latest phrases of the school of art whose chief exponent in America he undoubtedly is. Of our great New Englanders — Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Holmes, Mrs. Stowe — he says: "Their art was Puritan. So far as it was impressed . . . it was marred by the intense ethicism that pervaded . . . and still characterizes the New England mind. . . . They still helplessly pointed the moral in all they did. It was in poetry and in romance that they excelled. In

the novel, so far as they attempted it, they failed. . . . New England yet lacks her novelist, because it was her instinct and her conscience to be true to an ideal of life rather than to life itself." Of the greatest of American novels, he concluded by saying that "it is an address to the conscience and not to the taste; to the ethical sense, not the æsthetical sense."

This is not the place, nor does it offer the space, in which to reply with anything which I should call thoroughness to such a view of the nature of art. But it seems to be the place for me to suggest, at least, so much as this: — Since art implies the truthful and conscientious study of life as it is, we contend that to be a radically defective view of art which would preclude from it the ruling constituents of life. Moral character is to human life what air is to the natural world; — it is elemental.

There was more than literary science in Matthew Arnold's arithmetic when he called conduct "three fourths of life." Possibly the Creator did not make the world chiefly for the purpose of providing studies for gifted novelists; but if He had done so, we can scarcely imagine that He could have offered anything much better in the way of material, even though one look the moral element squarely in

the face, and abide by the fact of its tremendous proportion in the scheme of things. The moral element, it cannot be denied, predominates enormously in the human drama. The moral struggle, the creation of character, the moral ideal, failure and success in reaching it, anguish and ecstasy in missing or gaining it, the instinct to extend the appreciation of moral beauty, and to worship its Eternal Source, — these exist wherever human being does. The whole magnificent play of the moral nature sweeps over the human stage with a force, a splendor, and a diversity of effect, which no artist can deny if he would, which the greatest artist never tries to withstand, and against which the smallest will protest in vain.

Strike "Ethicism" out of life, good friends, before you shake it out of story!

Fear less to seem "Puritan" than to be inadequate. Fear more to be superficial than to seem "deep." Fear less to "point your moral" than to miss your opportunity.

It is for us to remind you, since it seems to us that you overlook the fact, that in any highly-formed or fully-formed creative power, the "ethical" as well as the "æsthetical sense" is developed. Where "the taste" is developed at the expense of "the conscience," the artist is incomplete: he is, in this case, at

least *as* incomplete as he is where the ethical sense is developed at the expense of the æsthetic. Specialism in literary art, as in science, has its uses; but it is not symmetry; and this is not a law intended to work only one way.

It is an ancient and honorable rule of rhetoric, that he is the greatest writer who, other things being equal, has the greatest subject. He is, let us say, the largest artist who, other things being equal, holds the largest view of human life. The largest view of human life, we contend, is that which recognizes moral responsibility, and which recognizes it in the greatest way.

In a word, the province of the artist is to portray life as it is; and life *is* moral responsibility. Life is several other things, we do not deny. It is beauty, it is joy, it is tragedy, it is comedy, it is psychical and physical pleasure, it is the interplay of a thousand rude or delicate motions and emotions, it is the grimmest and the merriest motley of phantasmagoria that could appeal to the gravest or the maddest brush ever put to palette; but it is steadily and sturdily and always moral responsibility. An artist can no more fling off the moral sense from his work than he can oust it from his private life. A great artist (let me repeat)

is too great to try to do so. With one or two familiar exceptions, of which more might be said, the greatest have laid in the moral values of their pictures just as life lays them in ; and in life they are not to be evaded. There is a squeamishness against "ethicism," which is quite as much to be avoided as any squeamishness about "the moral nude in art," or other debatable question. The great way is to go grandly in, as the Creator did when He made the models which we are fain to copy. After all, the Great Artist is not a poor master ; all His foregrounds stand out against the perspective of the moral nature. Why go tiptoeing about the easel to avoid it?

"Helplessly to point the moral" is the last thing needful or artistic. The moral takes care of itself. Life is moral struggle. Portray the struggle, and you need write no tract. In so far as you feel obliged to write the tract, your work is not well done. One of the greatest works of fiction ever given to the world in any tongue was "Les Misérables." Are those five books the less novels because they raised the mortal cry of the despised and rejected against the deafness of the world? By the majesty of a great art, No!

Did Victor Hugo write a tract? He told an immortal story. Hold beside it the sketches

and pastels, the etchings, the studies in dialect, the adoration of the incident, the dissection of the cadaver, which form the fashion in the ateliers of our schools to-day!

It has seemed to me, to return to the personal question, that so far as one is able to command attention at all, one's first duty in the effort to become a literary artist is to portray the most important, not altogether the least important, features of the world he lives in.

The last thirty years in America have pulsated with moral struggle. No phase of society has escaped it. It has ranged from social experiment to religious cataclysm, and to national upheaval. I suggest that even moral reforms, even civic renovations, might have their proper position in the artistic representation of a given age or stage of life. I submit that even the religious nature may be fit material for a work of art, which shall not be refused the name of a novel *for that reason.* Such expressions of "ethicism" are phases of human life, are elements of human nature.

Therefore, they are lawful material for any artist who chooses them; who understands them; and whose art is sufficient for their control. If he has sacrificed truth or beauty to didactics, he is, in so far, no artist. But be-

cause he selects for his canvas — whether from mere personal aptitude, or from a color sense, which leads him to prefer the stronger values — the moral elements of life, he shall not *for that reason* be denied the name of artist. "Omit Eternity in your estimate of area," said a great mathematician, "and your solution is wrong." Omit the true proportions of moral responsibility in your estimate of beauty, you who paint for "Art's sake," and your art is in error.

There is one form of fiction which, I think, is imperfectly understood by students and critics, to which, as it happens, I have given some special attention, and which is therefore peculiarly interesting to me. I mean the short story. The difficulties in the way of creating a good novel are sufficiently obvious; I question whether they are as severe as those in the case of the short story. The short story, in its present stage of evolution, is a highly-developed piece of workmanship, and will, I think, yet become a far more exquisite one than we at present compass.

A good short story is a work of art which daunts us in proportion to its brevity. It would not be easy for one who has not "served his time out" at this form of creation, to understand

the laws of construction involved in it, and the rigidity of obedience demanded by them. Perhaps I ought fairly to say, in venturing to offer this assertion, that, personally, I make a very hard time of it, over a short story. I do not know how to write one easily or quickly. "*Those things?*" said a friend to me once, and he a learned man, accustomed to study from fourteen to eighteen hours a day at his own profession, "Why, I supposed you got those off in a few hours!"

It has always taken me at least from a month to six weeks to finish a magazine story. I confess that I "toil terribly" over them. It makes little difference whether the *motif* comes in a blinding flash, or in a slow, insulated, electric current: — the construction and execution remain inexorable ideals frowning above attention, patience, vitality, energy, until the work is done. One who honors this vehicle of thought is often ill with the strain, before a magazine tale of forty pages of manuscript can be apparently completed. The work upon such a story is never done. Revision calls the vision to account in that iron exaction from one's self which is so much more remorseless than the exaction that any critic can make upon one.

Fortunately, perhaps, the editor calls for his copy, and the laboring pen must drop its lov-

ing task. The story goes to press. Then come the days and nights of wishing that it had stayed at home! Then the steady action of the brain, which has for weeks stiffened about the story, goes on, till it meets the reaction awaiting all strenuous labor. I recast, remodel, retouch, destroy the whole thing a dozen times in my mind, and recreate it; scathing myself that I ever suffered it to leave the safe protection of the little pasteboard pad held across the lap, on which I write. The proof-sheets come; at once a species of relief, and of torment. The changes which can and which cannot be made in the text combat each other. No proof leaves the study without three revisions.

I look upon a short story, properly fitted for the higher magazines of our day, as one of the very finest forms of expression. No inspiration is too noble for it; no amount of hard work is too severe for it. It is my belief that there is a future for the short story, which all our experiments and achievements are building with a gradual and a beautiful architecture.

Is the natural growth of this way of telling a story in part a concession to the restlessness of our times, in which all men are driven by "the whip of the sky," and leisure is a lost art? Shall we some time come to the point

where people will no longer think themselves able to read books? Will the novel dwindle to the novelette? (that dreariest of efforts to do a thing and not do it at the same time!) Will the scientific volume shrink to the essay in the last review? Will all the classics in fiction some day be short stories? Who can prophesy? Not I: and would not, if I could.

Perhaps the question oftenest asked of any writer by "the great unknown" of his readers is, which of his own writings he personally prefers. It has always seemed to me rather a foolish question; for it is not of the slightest consequence what an author thinks about his own work: he may have his opinion as to what ought to be the best thing he has done; but his readers will decide for him what *is* the best — or the worst — that he has offered them.

"The public," Thackeray used to say, "is a jackass." With this great authority I feel forced to differ a little. On the whole, I have a profound respect for the sense of the reading public. If large numbers of intelligent people like a book, one may believe in one's soul that it is the poorest thing one has done, but one is forced to think that there was something worth while about it. If they dislike a book, I am more than ready to suspect that there is a reason for it, though I may labor

under the personal delusion that it is my chef-d'œuvre.

Still, since there seems to be a widespread, natural wish to know how authors discriminate among their own works, I do not know that it is any more unreasonable a demand to comply with than the mania for autographs.

And, by the way, if I may take a moment's recess from a subject which will not be the worse for a respite, this may be as good a place as any other in which to say that I have been reluctantly forced, for dear life, to decline the distribution of autographs by mail, except for the gratification of the sick, and for charities. The demand having reached a point where I had no longer strength or time to comply with it, I was forced to adopt a course not at heart as ungracious as it may seem. Good Lord deliver us from ten, twenty cards to an envelope! And preserve us from the crisis, when the autograph epidemic strikes a school or a college, like the measles, and runs through! When autograph bedquilts and autograph aprons vie with autograph lampshades and autograph tablecloths, a writer who cannot command secretary, typewriter, or any aid whatever to the mechanical part of his profession, finds himself at bay. When, one day, I received a peremptory order from some

remote and unknown individual for *autograph prayers*, I resorted to the protest of all overworked and underpaid laborers in our times, — I struck.

To come back to our bisected paragraph : if I am to say for which of my short stories I have any especial preference, the list would be sadly brief. "The Madonna of the Tubs," perhaps, and "Jack the Fisherman," "The Supply at Saint Agatha's," "The Bell of Saint Basil's," and possibly one other. These indicate to my aspiration the astral bodies of something which I should have liked to do, if I could have done it.

Among the books which I have written in the last twenty-five years, there are too many which were cast in very early youth, when an unpracticed pen and unformed ideas of art compassed nothing that I like to recall, or to have others remember.

The stories known as "The Gates" series have a certain interest to me, for the reason that they continue to this day to find more readers than any or all other books I have written ; and that, in chronological proportion. "Beyond the Gates" and "The Gates Between" were written in maturer life than the first ; I have a little tenderness for these two dreams of the life to be.

"The Story of Avis" is a woman's book; and an author would care for it in proportion as she cared for her own sex.

Perhaps, on the whole, I have written nothing which I should be so sorry to have seriously misunderstood, or am so glad to know that I am finding friends for, as the last story, — "A Singular Life."

This brings me to say, gladly, how much I owe, in the little share of the hard work of my times which I have done, to the picturesque, warm-hearted people of the sea among whom I have spent the last twenty summers. The tide does not rise through my pen as it did through Celia Thaxter's, who, I think, scarcely published a poem which did not contain an allusion to the sea; but I have neighbored the life of the coast too long not to feel myself a part of it. I am told that certain "material" in Gloucester is pointed out as the original of scenes or of characters in some of my stories; and I should like to take this opportunity to say that, while I may paint in the tints or outlines of rocks and beaches, downs and harbor, fleet and wharf, I never draw portraits of my neighbors or of my friends.

They have taught me much, however, of a kind of knowledge of which it would be impossible for any writer to divest himself. I honor

their courage, their generosity, their patience in hardship, and their pluck in overcoming it; and I like that something wild and salt in their natures akin to the winds and the waves in which they live. In so far as their qualities have washed up into my stories, the debt is distinctly mine.

The story of "A Singular Life" came out of the depths of the sea, and of a heart that has long loved the sea-people. Bayard is my dearest hero.

Our Gloucester home itself has suffered a sea-change within the last five years. The choice spot on the chosen side of the harbor became in time a Babel, in which only those "who sleep o' nights" could rest. The tramp and the tongue of the summer army devastated Paradise. The wand of the house-mover — most startling of modern magicians — waved over the cottage; and to-day we find ourselves wafted from shore to farm; from stormy tides, both salt and human, we have come to anchor in

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood."

How confusing and bewitching is the experience, no one can divine who had not moved his house, and gone on living in it!

Through windows which used to gaze on Norman's Woe, and Boston Light, and the

tossing Eastern shore, and the fleets champing at their roads, like tethered sea-horses at their bits, we look to see "the daisies dressed for the dance" with the clovers, and the cattle slowly winding across the downs beyond the rope-gate which — with the genuine native Gloucester instinct — we found ourselves quite naturally constructing out of the sheets of our fishing-boat that we do not call a yacht; who tugs at her mooring off the pier, six minutes away. Beyond the door on which the spray used to dash in the autumn gales, lies the tapestry of the marshes, a vast Persian rug, unfolded in all the dull, deep shades that oriental weavers love, against the feet of the cliffs, whose gray shoulders mark the fascinating foreground of the downs.

Happy the flitting that stirs from home to home, and never from home to hotel life!

There is a hillside in the Garden City of Massachusetts, where we have built the most modest of houses into the most luxurious of landscapes. All our splendor is outside. "Oh," said a shivering cockney, "these places where there is climate, and nothing else!" To such a visitor our "poem of places" might seem a view, and nothing else. But town life has not spoiled the whole of our day and generation; and enough remain who have eyes to see

THE HOUSE AT NEWTON CENTRE

and nerves to feel the free horizon, the pure, electric air, the gracious sweep of hill and valley outline, the rose-garden of the sunrise, the conflagration of the sunset, the banner of the woods and meadows.

Poverty itself is rich in a country home; and plain New England comfort and economy we consider to be in princely circumstances.

Our upholstery hangs in our silver birches and bronze chestnuts, our red oaks and olive pines. Our Wilton and Axminster lie in our clovers and snowdrifts. Our bric-à-brac shines on the boughs of our apple-trees when the blossom blushes. Our jewels blaze on the tips of our pine-fronds when the ice-storms glaze, and the sun of the winter thaw is hot. Our galleries are filled with the masterpieces of May and of October, framed in quiet study windows, whose moods we choose to fit with ours.

We can never quite want for society when our pine-groves talk; they have taught us their language, and we need no translator when the winds are abroad. The piano rings to the accompaniment of grand winter storms, from which only the true country lover never shrinks; and the books on their shelves or tables turn loving faces to the readers, who do not count the evenings dull in the society of

these loyal and lifelong friends. The country-side without and the fireside within open the book of home together; and the word they read is peace.

It is impossible for us to sing too loud the song of country life. For a student we believe it to be the one way of living. Perhaps, to be just, I should say suburban life; since it is but twenty-five minutes from Boston to our door; and the world is always with us if we want it.

In point of fact, one may not want it very much. The distractions, the exhaustions, the savage noises, the demands of town life, are, for me, mortal enemies to thought, to sleep, and to study; its extremes of squalor and of splendor do not stimulate, but sadden me; certain phases of its society I profoundly value, but would sacrifice them to the heaven of country quiet, if I had to choose between.

In this shelter of snow and silence we spend eager winters; for our hardest work, like that, perhaps, of most people of our calling, is done between October and June. Life seems to grow busier, I find, as middle age strikes step with one. I wonder is this always so? "I have always been thinking," said a gentle, care-worn woman to me once, "that the time would come when things would grow easier; it never

has; perhaps it will yet." Perhaps it did; for she died that year.

But we, like so many others who think more of working than of dying, care only to push on steadily, wishing less for cessation of toil than for strength to keep at it; and for wisdom to make it worthy of the ideal of labor and of life which we believe to be the most precious gift of Heaven to any soul. When one has gone as far as one can in search of it, will it come, like the father in the parable, though yet a great way off, to meet one and shorten the remainder of the way?

The fog was breathing off Cape Ann when I put my pen to the first words of these broken recollections. The coast was hidden. The sea was calling. He asked grave questions.

The fog is breathing over the inland rolling country as I write this closing page. The blue and purple mists of a soft November storm, that cannot make up its mind whether to stay or go, smoke far along the valley. The outlines of the woods and distance are blurred as if with an imperious brush. Half the meaning of the gentle scene is hidden. The sea is too many miles away to hear him. I am the one who does the calling, who asks the questions now. But strong silence answers me.

Since out of life we all learn a few things

well, we find it natural to try to make them over to other lives; and we should choose for our telling, not the most brilliant lessons, but those that have been educative to ourselves; those that will make it easier to live; and more possible to live happily, and with the eyes focussed upon a true horizon.

Perhaps, in my honest soul, I am wondering if these fragments will have done as much as this for any reader of all the patient number.

But the mist is on the hills, as on the valleys; and the outlines of the landscape all are hidden. I can see but a little way.

Is it the fog that reminds me? Perhaps! But that, or something else, drags out of my pen the poignant words of Zangwill, who said of a certain writer that "he had concealed himself behind an autobiography." If one has done as much as that, perhaps one has met the chief conditions of the case.

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(Phelps), " Mrs.H.D.
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